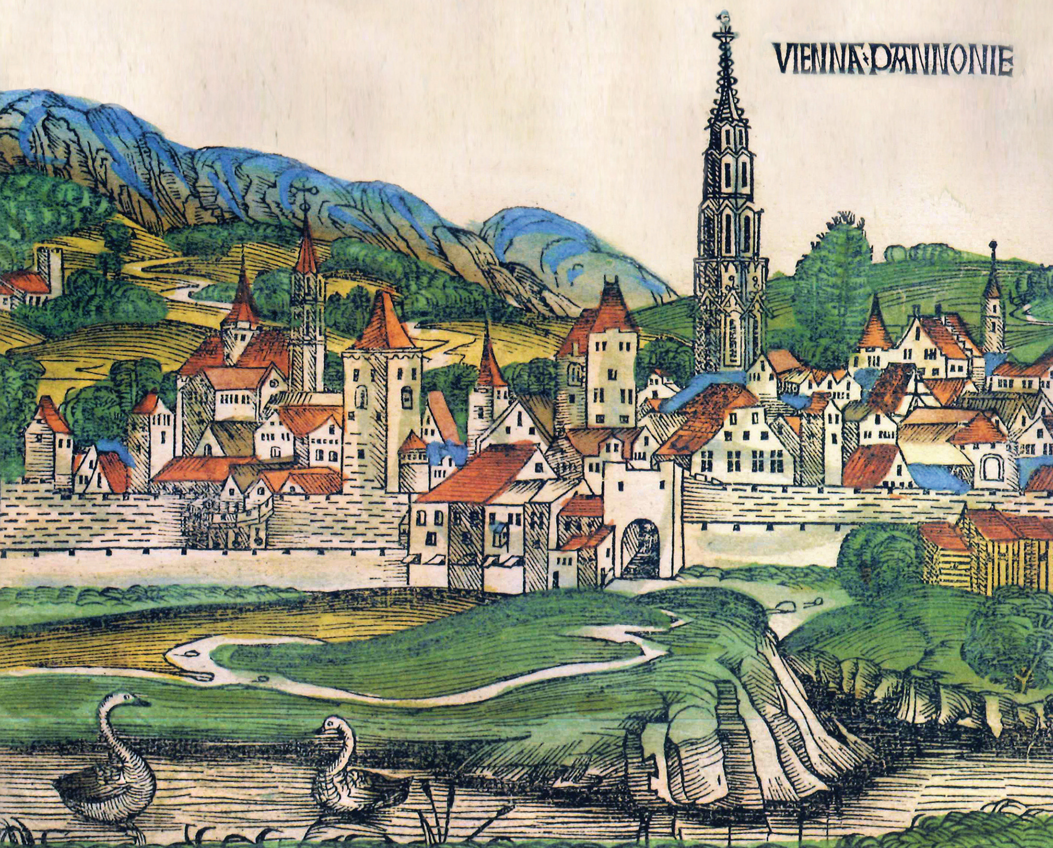
THE UNBEARABLE WEIGHT OF EMPIRE

The Ottomans in Central Europe – a Failed Attempt at Universal Monarchy (1390–1566)

PÁL FODOR



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Research Centre for the Humanities,
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To Géza Dávid in cordial remembrance
of our joint efforts in studying Ottoman history

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INTRODUCTION

On account of their particular situation, Hungarian Ottomanists have always given special attention to the expansionism and political ambitions of the Ottomans in Europe – above all in Central Europe. Two main motives lay behind their interest. First, they sought answers to one of the basic questions of Hungarian national history: Was it inevitable that Hungary should be (partially) occupied by the Ottomans and suffer the irreversible damage of centuries of military conflict? Second – and this is closely related to the first question – they sought to understand why the Ottoman Empire persistently attacked Hungary for more than a hundred years, launching its occupation of the country in the early sixteenth century.[1]

Over the past thirty years, I too have examined these two interconnected issues on several occasions. The results of my initial efforts were published in a book in Hungarian in 1991. The monograph comprised two major chapters: 1. *Török politikai törekvések Magyarországon, 1520–1541* (Ottoman political aims in Hungary, 1520–1541); and 2. *Magyarország és Bécs az oszmán hódító ideológiában* (The place of Hungary

[1] Lajos Fekete, *Budapest a törökkorban* [Budapest in the Ottoman period]. (Budapest, 1944). Idem, *Magyarság, törökség: két világnézet bajvívói* [Hungarians and Turks: champions of two world views]. (Budapest, 1947). Gyula Káldy-Nagy, 'Suleimans Angriff auf Europa', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28:2 (1974) 163–212. Klára Hegyi, *Egy világbirodalom végvidékén* [On the borders of a world power]. (Magyar História) (Budapest, 1976). Ferenc Szakály, 'Phases of Turco–Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33 (1979) 65–111. Idem, 'The Hungarian-Croatian Border Defence System and Its Collapse', in János M. Bak – Béla K. Király (eds.), *From Hunyadi To Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. (Eastern European Monographs, CIV; War and Society in Eastern Central Europe, Vol. III.) (Brooklyn, 1982), 141–159. Klára Hegyi – Vera Zimányi, *The Ottoman Empire in Europe*. (Budapest, 1989). Géza Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary: Mohács 1526–Buda 1541*. (Boulder, CO, Highland Lakes, NJ, 1989). On the earlier Hungarian scholarship of the subject, see Pál Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520–1541', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45:2–3 (1991) 274–279.

and Vienna in the Ottoman ideology of conquest).[2] The first chapter was published in English in the same year and in Turkish some time later,[3] while the second chapter – again as a separate article – was published in German (prior to the publication of the book).[4] To a greater or lesser extent these publications have been integrated into Ottomanist discourses, although they have not always received fair treatment (for instance, some authors have cited the documents published and analysed by me as unknown archival sources). For several reasons, I subsequently returned to the subject-matter on numerous occasions. In 1994, Géza Dávid and I co-authored a study on the Ottoman–Hungarian peace talks of 1512–14, which we published in a volume edited by us on various aspects of Ottoman–Hungarian relations in the sixteenth century.[5] In 1996, another colleague and I published Hieronymus Łaski's report on his negotiations in Istanbul in late 1527 and early 1528. The report is widely viewed as one of the most important documents of Ottoman–Hungarian relations in the period.[6] In the same volume, I published a detailed analysis of the situation

[2] Pál Fodor, *Magyarország és a török hódítás* [Hungary and the Ottoman conquest]. (Budapest, 1991); the appendix at the end of the book includes facsimiles of four Ottoman documents with a Hungarian translation.

[3] Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy', re-published in Idem, *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire.* (Analecta Isisiana) (Istanbul, 2000), 105–169. The Turkish version: 'Macaristan'a Yönelik Osmanlı Siyaseti, 1520–1541', *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 40 (2004) 11–85.

[4] Pál Fodor, 'Ungarn und Wien in der osmanischen Eroberungsideologie (im Spiegel der Târîḫ-i Beç ḳrâlı, 17. Jahrhundert)', *Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (1989) 81–98, re-published in Idem, *In Quest of the Golden Apple*, 45–69.

[5] 'Hungarian–Ottoman Peace Negotiations in 1512–1514', in Géza Dávid – Pál Fodor (eds.), *Hungarian–Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent*. (Budapest, 1994), 9–45.

[6] Gábor Barta (ed.), *Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. Hyeronimus Łaski tárgyalása a töröknél János király nevében. Habardanecz János jelentése 1528 nyári sztambuli tárgyalásairól* [Two negotiations in Istanbul. Hyeronimus Łaski's talks at the Porte on behalf of King John. Report of Johannes Habardanecz about his talks in Istanbul during the summer of 1528]. (Budapest, 1996).

and political aspirations of the Ottoman Empire in the 1520s.[7] In 2004, I examined Ottoman–Hungarian relations once again, doing so this time from the initial period until the mid-sixteenth century. My aim was to give a comprehensive account of the ambitions and opportunities of both sides as well as the external and internal dynamics of the relationship.[8] Although this study was also published in English,[9] it remained just as unnoticed as that of 1996 (owing in part to the fact that the English version of the book was simply not distributed). The same fate awaited another article published only in Hungarian (and so non-existent as far as international scholarship is concerned), which dealt with Ottoman imperial policy from the occupation of the Hungarian capital Buda (in 1541) until the mid-1550s.[10] In contrast, a collective volume that I co-edited with Géza Dávid on the parallel developments of border defence systems by the Habsburgs and Ottomans in Hungary was given a favourable reception. This latter volume was published by Brill in 2000.[11] In addition, I have published several articles of varying length on

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7 Pál Fodor, 'A Bécsbe vezető út. Az oszmán nagyhatalom az 1520-as években [The road leading to Vienna. The Ottoman great power in the 1520s]', in Barta (ed.), *Két tárgyalás Sztambulban*, 63–96, re-published in János B. Szabó (ed.), *Mohács*. (Nemzet és emlékezet) (Budapest, 2006), 387–409.

8 Pál Fodor, 'A szimurg és a sárkány. Az Oszmán Birodalom és Magyarország (1390–1533)', in István Zombori (ed.), *Közép-Európa harca a török ellen a 16. század első felében*. (Budapest, 2004), 9–35.

9 Pál Fodor, 'The *Simurg* and the Dragon. The Ottoman Empire and Hungary (1390–1533)', in István Zombori (ed.), *Fight Against the Turk in Central Europe in the First Half of the 16th Century*. (Budapest, 2004), 9–35.

10 Géza Dávid – Pál Fodor (eds.), *„Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való". A szultáni tanács Magyarországra vonatkozó rendeletei (1544–1545, 1552) / "Affairs of State Are Supreme". The Orders of the Ottoman Imperial Council Pertaining to Hungary (1544–1545, 1552)*. (História könyvtár. Okmánytárak, 1.) (Budapest, 2005), XXXV–LV.

11 Géza Dávid – Pál Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*. (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Halil İnalcık. Vol. 20.) (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2000). In a sense, our later book (Géza Dávid – Pál Fodor [eds.], *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders [Early Fifteenth – Early Seventeenth Centuries]*. [The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Halil İnalcık. Vol. 37.] [Leiden, Boston, 2007]) that deals with

the influence of world political developments on the Ottoman advance in Hungary; these too have received scant attention, perhaps in part because of the difficulty of accessing them.[12]

In this volume I publish a reworking of three earlier studies, each of which has been thoroughly revised. The first chapter arose from the merging and updating of two articles: *The Simurg and the Dragon*… (2004) and *Bécsbe vezető út*… (The Road Leading to Vienna) (1996). In many respects, the chapter may be considered new and independent work, for in the course of the rewriting process I sought to study and integrate the vast amount of literature that has been released since 1996 and to reflect on the facts that have come to light and on the most recent conceptual issues. The second chapter consists of a study originally published in Hungarian in 2005; it too has been reworked and expanded to complement the first chapter. In this way I could extend the chronological arc to the history of Ottoman policy in Central Europe and of Ottoman–Hungarian relations from the beginnings until the second third of the sixteenth century.

There have been quite a few considerations behind my decision to prepare and publish this volume.

ransom industry in the Ottoman frontier regions, with a special focus on Hungary, is a follow up to this volume.

[12] Pál Fodor, 'Between Two Continental Wars: the Ottoman Naval Preparations in 1590–1592', in Ingeborg Baldauf – Suraiya Faroqhi (Hrsg., unter Mitwirkung von Rudolf Veselý), *Armağan. Festschrift für Andreas Tietze.* (Praha, 1994), 89–111, republished in Idem, *In Quest of the Golden Apple,* 171–190. Idem, 'Prelude to the Long War (1593–1606). Some Notes on the Ottoman Foreign Policy in 1591–1593', in Güler Eren et al. (eds.), *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilization.* Vol. I. (Istanbul, 2000), 297–301. Idem, 'The Impact of the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman–Persian Wars on Ottoman Policy in Central Europe', in Éva M. Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano–Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th Centuries.* (Acta et Studia, I.) (Piliscsaba, [2002]2003, 41–51. Idem, 'The Ottoman Empire, Byzantium and Western Christianity: The Implications of the Siege of Belgrade, 1456', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61:1–2 (2008) 43–51.

The first consideration relates to the nature and operative mode of Ottoman politics and warfare. More than ever, I share the view that Hungary in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries came to occupy a special place in Ottoman policy and imagination. Hungary assumed the status of archenemy of the Ottomans in much the same way that the Ottoman Empire had become the archenemy of the Hungarians as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. As the only power capable of resistance, Hungary came to symbolise the whole of Christendom in the eyes of the Ottomans, who after 1453 viewed the country in some sense as the successor to Byzantium.[13] And so it is quite understandable that its attack and defeat became the first and most important condition for Ottoman world domination and the renovation of the Roman Empire, which became, after the conquest of the Near East, the principal aim of Ottoman power politics. By the 1520s the two powers were no longer in the same class in terms of military strength and material resources, and there are indications that some Ottoman leaders and military groups thought little of their Hungarian adversaries. Still, Ottoman forces departing for the battle of Mohács exhibited a strong fear of Hungarian fighting power.[14] In knowledge of the military actions of the Ottomans in Central Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century and the underlying imperial ideology, one would have to be blind not to see that the Ottoman leadership regarded Hungary as one of, if not *the most* important of their "frontlines". Yet the Hungarian (or more broadly, Central European) front and Ottoman–Hungarian and Ottoman–Habsburg rivalries

[13] Pál Fodor, 'Byzantine Legacies in Ottoman Identity', forthcoming.

[14] Cf. Pietro Bragadin's report of June 9, 1526: the sultan's army set out for Hungary on April 23, but "vanno con paura perchè ungheri son gran valent'uomini contra turchi". Eugenio Albèri, *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato durante il secolo decimosesto*. Serie III, volume III. (Firenze, 1855), 111. It is also true that after the fall of Belgrade and the defeat at Mohács, the reputation of the Hungarians diminished.

are often presented as mere secondary factors in discussions of Ottoman frontier zones and imperial strategy[15] or – *horribile dictu* – they are completely ignored. A striking example of this is Giancarlo Casale's book *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. Not to mention that probably there was no such age in Ottoman history,[16] how can one take seriously a work that claims to analyse the "grand strategy" of the Ottomans in the sixteenth century but fails even to mention the Habsburg Empire or the wars in Hungary?[17] Moreover, even works of fundamental importance are sometimes simply ignored in scholarly literature.[18] During the past decade and a half, Gábor Ágoston, to whose excellent works I make frequent reference below, has done much to ensure that the Central European region receives the attention it deserves – both inside and outside Hungary. Even so, the challenges are still great in this area. My primary aim, therefore, is to offer a more realistic picture of the role of the Hungarian

[15] Leslie Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19:1 (2004) 21. This does not apply to the excellent book by Suraiya Faroqhi: *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*. (London, New York, 2004).

[16] I think this is so even if in her much more balanced new study Pinar Emiralioğlu also argues that the Ottoman Empire "was an active participant of the Early Modern Period and of the 'Age of the Exploration'"; see *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. (Farnham, Burlington, 2014), 4.

[17] Cf. Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. New York, 2010. This work, published by Oxford University Press and discussing Ottoman policy in the Indian Ocean, is not only useless but also dangerously misleading: in many places it tricks the less informed reader and contains a series of distortions and a myriad of unrealistic concepts. The book should be read together with the review by Svat Soucek, 'About the Ottoman Age of Exploration', *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010) 313–342, particularly 338–342.

[18] To cite one example: without knowledge of Sándor Papp's studies, it is impossible to make an accurate appraisal of Ottoman–Hungarian–Habsburg relations in the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries. However, authors writing on this subject have made scant references to Papp's studies – perhaps because he published most of them, including his most important work, in German: Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden der Osmanen für Ungarn und Siebenbürgen. Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung*. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philisophisch-historische Klasse. Schriften der Balkan-Kommission, 42.) (Wien, 2003).

or Central European frontline in Ottoman politico-military planning. Thus, this book seeks to show how the conflict in this region sealed the fate of the Ottoman Empire and how a series of erroneous decisions on the part of the Ottomans led to the failure of their universalist imperial programme. In doing so, the book also tries to provide clues as to how these developments contributed to a profound internal transformation of the empire.

The second consideration is linked with the paradigmatic change that has occurred in Ottomanist historiography over the past twenty to twenty-five years. When I wrote my first papers on the subject, both Western and Turkish mainstream historians regarded the development of the Ottoman Empire as a "unique and isolated phenomenon", one that could not be compared with anything else and which followed its own civilisational and institutional logic. Indeed, in many regards, the Ottoman Empire was considered to have been an exotic political and cultural entity. Accordingly, historians at the time were of the view that the relationship between (Christian) Europe and the (Muslim) Ottoman Empire was above all one of hostility. However, in consequence of the so-called "imperial (or post-colonial) turn", we have seen dramatic changes in recent historiography.[19] Rather than emphasise the "otherness" of the once isolated Ottoman Empire, historians have tended more recently to narrate its history as an inseparable part of early modern European (or even Eurasian) history. The unique features and status of the Ottoman Empire have been downplayed, while more attention has been given to "facts" – however obscure – that point to the empire's entanglement and well-connectedness and to transcultural commonalities. Nowadays many historians

[19] Alan Mikhail – Christine M. Philliou, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54:4 (2012) 721–745. Suraiya Faroqhi, Empires before and after Post-colonial Turn: The Ottomans', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 36 (2010) 57–76.

even argue that the Ottoman Empire was not only a passive recipient (or "victim") of European (more recently, Eurasian) political, technological and cultural changes, but also an active shaper of such changes.[20] Indeed, according to a recent train of thought (filled with Neophyte zeal), the Ottoman Empire even "contributed to what has been categorised and defined as the Renaissance".[21]

Attached to this new view of history, which seems to be particularly strong in the United States and among Turkish historians with ties to the United States, we find the label "early modern/modernity", which provides the wider global framework and acts like a magic wand to solve all the problems arising from the change in paradigm. In 2004 Suraiya Faroqhi described in his book – now regarded as a turning point in Ottomanist historiography – how the Ottoman elite and, by extension, the context of the empire were early modern in the period 1540–1774.[22] Ever since, her growing number of followers have sought, in all areas, to uncover the elements – and offer them up for a comparative history of the empires – that in their view linked the Ottomans with others around them and which can be utilised to prove the global embeddedness of the Ottomans. It is not my task here to cover exhaustively this issue, but I should note that the concept is both obscure and, as Peter Burke has rightly concluded in a recent article, overused, for it

[20] As followers of the new school have written: "…The Ottoman Empire participated in many of the major developments which European historiography once considered unique to Europe." Pascal W. Firges – Tobias P. Graf, 'Introduction', in Pascal W. Firges – Tobias P. Graf – Christian Roth – Gülay Tulasoğlu, (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History*. (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İnalcık and Boğaç Ergene. Vol. 57.) (Leiden, Boston, 2014), 5.

[21] Claire Norton, 'Blurring the Boundaries: Intellectual and Cultural Interactions between the Eastern and Western; Christian and Muslim Worlds', in Anna Contadini – Claire Norton (eds.), *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World.* (Farnham, Burlington, 2013), 3–21.

[22] Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World*, 10–11, 25–26, 211.

has been seized on everywhere as a seemingly useful means for writing global history. To illustrate the problem, Burke uses the metaphor of the "stuffed suitcase": "There is a limit to the amount of work which concepts can be made to do, the intellectual weight they can be made to bear. At some point they crack under the strain, or to use less metaphorical language, they come to be used in such different, indeed contradictory senses that they hinder analysis rather than helping it. To vary the metaphor, the problem with the concept of modernity is that it is part of an intellectual suitcase into which too much has been stuffed. The lid won't shut. We need to unpack and begin again."[23]

I profoundly agree with Burke; and this is precisely the problem when speaking about the early modernity of the Ottoman Empire. The term is used indiscriminately, but everyone applies it in a slightly different sense, whereby its meaning and characteristics differ on each occasion.[24] A similar confusion affects the periodisation: most often the beginning of the period is set in the mid-fifteenth century, but some authors have (perhaps inadvertently) placed the beginning in the fourteenth century while others have put it in the eighteenth century; and as for when the period ended, there are differences between authors of 80–100 years.[25] All of this has not prevented the Ottomanists from "revealing" in their respective areas of expertise and with growing zeal the features of early modernity

[23] Peter Burke, 'Koraújkor? [What is early modern history?]', *Obeliscus* 1:1 (2014) 15.

[24] Virgina H. Aksan – Daniel Goffman, 'Introduction: Situating the Early Modern Ottoman World', in Virginia H. Aksan – Daniel Goffman (eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire.* (Cambridge, 2007), 1–12. Baki Tezcan, 'The Politics of Early Modern Ottoman Historiography', in Aksan – Goffman (eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans,* 167–198. Linda Darling, 'Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38:4 (2008) 505–531. Firges – Graf, 'Introduction', in Firges – Graf – Roth – Tulasoğlu (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains,* 1–10. Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World.* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization) (New York, 2013), 6–12, 243–252.

[25] See the studies referred to in the previous note.

they view as corresponding to European ones. In doing so – and this is the real problem – they have gradually "Europeanised" the Ottoman Empire. A background factor in this process has sometimes been a sense of good will aimed at resolving today's political problems: the minimisation of the significance of earlier hostilities and the questioning of the validity of the block paradigm may offer useful historical arguments for promoting Turkey's current European integration and for addressing cultural and religious tensions arising between Western Europe's indigenous populations and the immigrant Muslim communities.[26]

I do not claim that it is illegitimate to offer comparisons of the various empires; nor do I deny that the relationship between the Ottomans and Europe was certainly a more complex one than incessant warfare. Indeed, like John Elliott, I believe the Ottomans played a decisive and constitutive role in the formation of (early) modern Europe (I will return to this point later on).[27] Still, before our imagination runs away with us, we need to clarify several basic issues. For instance, what exactly did "Western" historiography mean by modernity – or more recently, early modernity – when the concept emerged in the 1950s. Here I am not thinking primarily about the absence in the Ottoman Empire of the various defining elements usually listed (Renaissance art, the Reformation, book printing, explorations, etc.). Rather, what seems to have been missing in

[26] For two well-written examples of such alternate, in part politically motivated, historical writings, see Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Habsburgs, Ottomans, and the Battle for Europe*. (New York, 2008). Ian Almond, *Two Faiths, One Banner: When Muslims Marched with Christians across Europe's Battlegrounds*. (Cambridge, Mass., 2009).

[27] Pál Fodor, 'Hungary between East and West: The Ottoman Turkish Legacy', in Pál Fodor – Gyula Mayer – Martina Monostori – Kornél Szovák – László Takács (Hrsg.), *More modoque. Die Wurzeln der europäischen Kultur und deren Rezeption im Orient und Okzident. Festschrift für Miklós Maróth zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*. (Budapest, 2013), 403–405.

the region (the "East") was the intellectual grounding that was needed in order to accept (and, more importantly, shape) the Renaissance. Although, as we know, the Arabs (Muslims) were the main mediators of the classical Greco-Roman tradition to medieval Europe, they did not take on or mediate the literature, poetry and aesthetic forms of antiquity (or the languages bearing such elements) in which the classical image of man was made manifest. Yet the true novelty of the Renaissance and of humanism (today known as early modernity) was the new image of man grounded in classical antiquity: the idea that man can use the instrumental mind to gain awareness of his abilities, including his ability to direct his own destiny.[28] Where do we see anything like this in Ottoman culture? Another question is the extent to which the Ottoman worldview was influenced by the rational philosophy of the Muslim Ibn Rushd (Averroës) whose ideas led to the birth of the European double truth doctrine, an indispensable element of the Renaissance.[29] If the Ottomans had been so keen to participate in the shaping of the Renaissance, then why did they ignore the Greek writings that had fallen into their possession and why did they allow the documents to migrate to the "Latins" where they served as sources for the new era? The heart of the problem also becomes evident when one looks at the outcomes of Ottoman history.[30] If the Ottomans – whether in response to external influences and through the adaptation of early modernity or as the result of internal changes – had kept pace with the Western countries and had developed their state and society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a manner similar to the English (this

[28] Rémy Brague, *Europe, la voie romaine*. (Paris, 1993). Bassam Tibi, *Kreuzzug und Djihad. Der Islam und die christliche Welt*. (München, 2001).

[29] This problem is extensively discussed in the book by Tibi, *ibid*.

[30] For this, see Mikhail – Philliou, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn', 725–727, and passim.

point is made by Baki Tezcan),[31] then how would one explain that the same reforms and methods which transformed the English (the West) into rulers of the world made the Ottoman Empire into a kind of colony of the West?

Leaving aside such theoretical considerations, we also see that the "facts" summoned to prove the interconnectedness and commonalities of the Ottomans and the world around them, stand on a very flimsy base or are simply products of an "imaginative mind". I could cite many examples of far-fetched comparisons that push the boundaries of common sense. For instance, it is inconceivable to me how anyone can speak of state formation in the sixteenth–seventeenth century in the case of an empire[32] that had been a strong, organised and efficient, albeit changing, entity since the fifteenth century. And, it seems, one is expected to do so simply because the sixteenth–seventeenth century was the era of state formation in Europe after the demise of the limited monarchies of the previous period. It is similarly nonsensical, in my view, to speak of "constitutionalism" or of "proto-democratisation" in the seventeenth century, a period of unbridled lawlessness and arbitrary rule in Ottoman history.[33] Baki Tezcan's book is also a cautionary tale about the distortions that may arise when superficial similarities are extrapolated into structural correspondences. Others, too, have been inclined to attribute the same kind of importance to an isolated event as they do to multiple facts or long-term organisational structures or attitudes. Briefly put, many among the new wave of historians find it difficult to distinguish between essential

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[31] Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*. (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization) (Cambridge, 2010).

[32] Cf. for example, Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 249–250. Another questionable conclusion is that "The Ottoman enterprise did not generate a consolidated empire until the mid-sixteenth century"; see Peirce, 'Changing Perceptions', 7.

[33] Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*. It is worth reading Rhoads Murphy's critical review in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 74:3 (2011) 482–484.

and non-essential information. Historians with at least some knowledge of sixteenth-century Ottoman history are equally perplexed to read that the Ottoman ruling elite of the time "was a class … *primus inter pares*" or that religious divisions were not so important for that elite – even while every major analysis has shown that the Ottoman ruling group in the era of Süleyman was more of an "oligarchy" than it ever had been before or became afterwards, with Islam constituting the most important cohesive bond.[34] And how should we respond to those who describe the Ottoman Empire as a "multiplicity of centers" when the centrality of the capital city Istanbul in all fields was unmatched.[35] It may be true that from the 1540s onwards manuscript newspapers (*avvisi*) were produced in Istanbul, whereby the imperial capital became – principally by way of the renegades and dragomans – a part of the pan-European system of communication, but it is also evident that these men had merely a small or negligible effect on Ottoman society, and that even though they disposed of an excellent intelligence service, the leaders of the empire often displayed a frightening ignorance of crucial political issues.[36] At this point, it is worth

[34] Şahin, *Empire and Power,* 250. Firges – Tobias, 'Introduction', 5. In contrast, for the oligarchic nature of the elite, Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*. (London, 2005), 35–46. See further, Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Woman and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*. (New York, Oxford), 1993, 65–90. Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty. Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400–1800*. (London, New York), 2008, 99–174.

[35] Firges – Tobias, 'Introduction', 10. For a different view: Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World,* 16–17. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 31. Pinaralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge,* 7–9. Gábor Ágoston, 'The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality to Empire', in John Andreas Olsen – Colin S. Gray (eds.), *The Practice of Strategy: From Alexander the Great to the Present*. (Oxford, New York, 2011), 118–119.

[36] Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik, 'Medien und Protagonisten im Kulturaustausch zwischen der Habsburgermonarchie und dem Osmanischen Reich', in Eckhard Leuschner – Thomas Wünsch (Hg.), *Das Bild des Feindes. Konstruktion von Antagonismen und Kulturtransfer im Zeitalter der Türkenkriege. Ostmitteleuropa, Italien und Osmanisches Reich*. (Berlin, 2013), 257–260. In contrast, for a grand vizier's ignorance of Hungarian affairs, see Fodor, 'Ungarn und Wien', 93: note 41, based on

noting that respect for the facts has also been on the decline. Even in prestigious publications, one can read that the first siege of Vienna took place in 1524 or that Charles V was elected emperor in 1521.[37] It is difficult to find words to describe the complete lack of knowledge displayed on a few pages of Daniel Goffman's acclaimed book;[38] at any rate, it clearly undermines one's confidence in the author's otherwise erudite narration of the "Greater Western World".

Enough of the negative examples! By mentioning them, my intent was not to deny that important new results have arisen from the "imperial or European turn" in Ottoman historiography. The integration of Ottoman history into European or universal history was both desirable and long overdue. Concerning the question of whether Ottoman history was generally well-connected, my answer too would be affirmative. However, if we are asking whether the Ottoman world participated fully in the early modern development of Europe, my answer is a firm no. In even clearer terms: the "Europeanisation" of Ottoman politics and social history coupled with the depiction of the empire as a kind of idealised prototype for today's post-national global ambitions, seems to me to be a highly dangerous route, for under certain conditions it can even lead to the falsification of history. As my colleague Géza Dávid and I remarked a decade and a half ago in connection with the new concept of the "frontier" and the North African frontier states, the apologetic

Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı Târihine Âid Belgeler – Telhîsler (1597–1607)*. (İstanbul, 1970), 113–114.

[37] Zweder von Martels, 'Old and New Demarcation Lines between Christian Europe and the Islamic Ottoman Empire: From Pope Pius II (1458–1464) to Pope Benedict XVI (2005–2013)', in Contadini – Norton (eds.), *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, 171. Palmira Brummett, 'Ottoman Expansion in Europe, ca. 1453–1606', in Suraiya N. Faroqhi – Kate Fleet (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Vol. 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1606*. (Cambridge, 2013), 51.

[38] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge, 2002), 99–105.

idealisation "can lead … to historical constructions which have little to do with one-time historical reality".[39] Similar caution has been shown by Alan Mikhail and Cristine M. Philliou who, while recognising the advances in knowledge brought about by the "imperial turn", have also underlined the following: "Early modernity has become a repository and testing ground for our post-national ambitions and desires."[40] In my view, those Ottomanist historians who have been seduced by the concept of early modernity should give due consideration to the author-duo's wise counsel on how the Ottoman Empire is best treated as an entity in its own right and, at the same time, as a part of the global system: "Difference – specificity not freakishness – must come before similarity. The crucial point is that the Ottoman Empire was not like any other empire. … This, of course, … does not mean it is beyond comparison. Quite the contrary. … We should … begin … to examine the positive processes going on in the space 'between' – not the assumed void, but an arena of intense contestation between a panoply of forces, actors, and places."[41]

This, indeed, is the aim of my book. The goal is to describe – from the initial period until the last third of the sixteenth century – the relationship that evolved between the Ottoman Empire (with its unique structures and modes of operation) and Hungary, a part of the *respublica christiana* that came into the possession of the Habsburg dynasty. An examination of the series of events underway in this "intermediate space" will also enhance our understanding of the Ottoman Empire's fate and destiny and the various power and human factors at play. A further aim is to demonstrate how, among the multiple connections of the Ottoman world,

39 Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs*, 12.
40 Mikhail – Philliou, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn', 736.
41 Mikhail – Philliou, *ibid.*, 743.

warfare and diplomacy (closely connected as they are) as well as trade retained their primacy throughout the period and how these factors were assigned greater importance than cultural and intellectual interaction and exchange.[42] At first sight this book may seem to be an ordinary (but hopefully not boring) political history or event history analysis, but in reality it intends to be more than that. It is also a structural historical and strategic historical study, and I seek to give a picture of the subject-matter spanning various "ages". In doing so, I also reflect on the issues arising in Ottoman studies out of the "empire for ages" approach. This term was coined by Mikhail and Philliou to relate how uniform Ottoman history was slowly fragmenting, as an increasing number of "separate" eras were being carved out of it ("age of the beloved", "age of the exploration", etc.), leading to its being debated according to a sometimes merely perceived or retrospectively constructed rationale. In my approach I am careful to put proper emphasis on long-term structures spanning "ages", thereby underscoring the importance of continuity in Ottoman history.

Finally, addressing several concrete issues, I must acknowledge that some results of the comparative (early modernist) studies can be combined with the "traditional" or structuralist approach. Suraiya Faroqhi drew attention to the fact that foreign policy – the development of relations with the outside world – has never been the exclusive prerogative of rulers or dynasties. In this respect, the Ottoman Empire was no exception,

[42] On military acculturation and exchange, see Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan. Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*. (Cambridge, 2005). Idem, 'Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450–1800', *Journal of World History* 25:1 (2014) 85–124. For an analysis of the contacts and networks of Ottoman (both Muslim and non-Muslim) merchants in east and west, see Suraiya N. Faroqhi, 'Trading between East and West: The Ottoman Empire of the Early Modern Period', in Firges – Graf – Roth – Tulasoğlu (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains*, 15–36.

and the empire's foreign policy decisions often emerged from struggles between various factions (and households) of the elite.[43] I agree in full with this conclusion and offer evidence in this book that even in the centralised Ottoman state, the opinions of the central and provincial elites had to be taken into account before strategic decisions were made and great military ventures embarked upon. This was true if for no other reason than that the empire was both a land-based and maritime polity, where tensions naturally arose between rival groups among the ruling elite with conflicting interests. I also agree with Faroqhi that sometimes decisions were based on expediency, perhaps after the arguments of one or the other faction had been adopted. This underscores the view – now widely held – that the so-called political households played an important and growing role in the Ottoman political system.[44] At the same time, I think it is wrong to cast doubt on the existence and significance of certain system-based "imperatives";[45] it seems to me that such imperatives – for instance, the long-term institutional structures and the closely associated mentality – could not be evaded by decision-makers and were factors exerting a strong influence on the decision-makers themselves. In agreement with Faroqhi and despite contrary opinions, I regard the Ottoman system – and Ottoman foreign policy – to have been decisively influenced by such factors as the strong legitimacy of the ruler and the dynasty, the strong cohesion of the ruling elite and the state apparatus, their dynastic loyalty, and their commitment to defend the interests of

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43 Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World*, 4–5, 27–28.

44 Faroqhi, 'Post-colonial Turn', 67–72. While historians date the rise of the households to the seventeenth century, in my view they existed some time before, but less visibly so; cf. Pál Fodor, 'Who Should Obtain the Castle of Pankota? Interest Groups and Self-Promotion in the Mid-Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Political Establishment', *Turcica* 31 (1999) 67–86, re-published in Idem, *In Quest of the Golden Apple*, 227–241.

45 Cf. Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World*, 5.

the state.[46] All this was of enormous advantage to the Ottoman Empire in the period under discussion when the estates and then the foreign and religious policies of the denominations and churches severely limited royal power in the main European rivals. It is no accident that the enemies of the Ottomans regarded the empire as far more efficient and purpose-driven than other states. However, as we shall see, even this did not suffice to ensure the accomplishment of the principal goals.

One final observation: my views published at the beginning of my career on the subject-matter have changed in only one essential aspect: my judgment of the imperial campaign of 1520–21. I once believed that at this time the Ottoman plans for conquest were limited to Hungary as even that appeared as too much of a challenge. More recently, however, the evidence has persuaded me that world domination became a goal of Ottoman policy immediately after Süleyman's accession to the throne. In my book, I present events in this light.

[46] The unreliable nature of the renegades (Christians) who became Ottomans is emphasised by Tobias P. Graf, 'Of Half-Lives and Double-Lives: "Renegades" in the Ottoman Empire and Their Pre-Conversion Ties', in Firges – Graf – Roth – Tulasoğlu (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains*, 131–149. In contrast, the cohesion and loyalty of the elite is underscored in Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World*, 29–30, 43–44, 213.

CHAPTER I

THE CONQUEST OF HUNGARY AND THE ROAD TO VIENNA (1370s–1530s)

WHY WERE THE OTTOMANS ALWAYS AT WAR? SOME ASSUMPTIONS

On behalf of János Hunyadi, governor of Hungary, his chancellor János Vitéz wrote the following to Pope Nicholas V on September 17, 1448: "If my memory does not fail me, the spiteful weapons of the Turks have been lurking around Europe for a hundred years now. They subjugated Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania in quick succession … casting them into servitude, depriving them of their religion, forcing onto them a foreign faith, foreign morals, foreign laws, and the language of the infidels. They showed no mercy either to the rights of man or to those of God. ... The devastating plague spread from there towards all the other neighbours. Recently, it nearly penetrated into the heart of Europe, gaining a foothold close to our country and homeland. ... For over sixty years, we have firmly withstood the scorching wrath of war, relying on our own resources and with the arms of a single nation. Though exhausted by the numerous defeats, the warfare and the mourning, we are persevering. ... To sum everything up in a few words: we have never suffered so much by any other foe, and apart from the memory of freedom, we are left with nothing but our weapons and courage, as many a time we have fallen into extreme peril… Because there is no cruelty that we have not endured and it will never end, whether we lose or win: the enemy will always be at our neck, for its hatred is greater even then its strength. Even now our enemy… wants not victory, but revenge us."[47]

[47] Sándor V. Kovács (publ.), *Magyar humanisták levelei, XV–XVI. század* [Letters of Hungarian humanists]. (Budapest, 1971), 120–121. Cf. Pál Fodor, 'The View of the Turk in Hungary: the Apocalyptic Tradition and the Red Apple in Ottoman–Hungarian Context', in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople.* Actes de la Table Ronde d'Istanbul (13–14 avril 1996) édités par Benjamin Lellouche et Stéphan Yerasimos et publiés par l'Institut Français d'Études

Hunyadi's chancellor had a good knowledge of Hungarian history. The Ottoman Turks had indeed appeared at – and even inside – the borders of Hungary sixty years earlier, in 1390. Together with auxiliary Serbian troops, they had "visited" and pillaged the *banate* of Macsó and the counties of Krassó and Temes in 1390, Syrmium in 1391 and the region around Temesvár and Syrmium in 1392.[48] The inhabitants of Hungary had soon come to realise that the "newcomers", whose advance into the Balkans had been much talked about, would be unusually tough and ambitious foes. Indeed, their methods were felt to be so ruthless that in the years during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437) they were regularly compared with the Tatars, who were the paragons of armed menace for Hungarians at the time.[49]

But who were these conquerors? The Ottoman state was formed in the first decades of the fourteenth century in the north-western corner of Asia Minor. The emergence of the new power was facilitated by two circumstances: 1. a population movement elicited by the advance of the Mongols into the Middle East, which forced hundreds of thousands of Oghuz (Turcoman) people to migrate to the border areas of the Seljuk and Byzantine Empires in Asia Minor; 2. a power vacuum that had come about by the end of the thirteenth century in the Ilkhanid Empire and its Seljuk vassal state, as well as in the remaining provinces of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor.[50]

Anatoliennes Georges-Dumézil d'Istanbul. (Varia Turcica, XXXIII.) (Paris, Montréal, 1999), 101–102.

48 Pál Engel, 'A török–magyar háborúk első évei 1389–1392 [The first years of the Ottoman–Hungarian warfare, 1389–1392]', *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111:3 (1998) 565–569.

49 Fodor, 'The View of the Turk', 100.

50 Halil İnalcık, 'The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1980) 72–75. Claude Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottoman*. (Istanbul, Paris, 1998), 275–295. Rudi Paul Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory*. (Ann Arbor, 2010[4]), esp. 81–101 (in his view Mongol rule was more

The tribe led by Osman (ca. 1288–1324) was not alone in organising the Turcomans of Asia Minor, but within a century he and his successors had overcome all their rivals and had made the defeated areas their own. At the time of the onslaught on Hungary, their troops were nearing the Euphrates in the east and were at the Danube in the west.

There is still no consensus among historians about the causes of this unprecedented success. One thing is unquestionable: in several regards their behaviour differed conspicuously from that of the other Turkish (Turcoman) rulers and families. From the outset they avoided the division and sharing of power customary among the Turks, and unlike their rivals they made use of the service they rendered as mercenaries to the Byzantines not only to acquire booty, but also to pursue a deliberate policy of territorial expansion. Characteristically, they immediately exploited upon the extraordinary opportunity that arose in the 1340s: when a battle for the throne broke out in the Byzantine Empire and the strongest Turcoman *beylik*s were put down by the Latins, they penetrated the vacated political and military spaces without hesitation.[51]

The sense of purpose, determination and long-term perspective of the House of Osman are striking, even though we know that, contrary to the dynastic legends that arose in the latter half of the fifteenth century, many of the early conquests in the Balkans were achieved in conjunction with the allied marcher lords (*uç beyi*s): the Evrenos, Mihaloğlu, İshakbeyoğlu

effective than scholars previously thought). Idem, 'Anatolia, 1300–1451', in Kate Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Vol. 1: Byzantium to Turkey 1071–1453*. (Cambridge, 2009), 118. Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*. (Cambridge, 1993[2]), 41–89.

51 Cf. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State.* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1995), 136–138. Lindner, 'Anatolia, 1300–1451', 108–109.

(latterly Turahanoğlu) and Malkoçoğlu families.[52] And even if it is true that the dynasty appropriated to itself the glory of its former comrades-in-arms and deliberately obscured the memory of their contribution to the founding of the state, we observe no significant difference in the manner in which the marcher lords and the dynasty pursued the policy of expansion and consolidation (for instance, the establishment of a network of charity kitchens and caravanserais based around dervish monasteries, the founding of new Muslim urban centres outside the walls of conquered cities, etc.).[53]

A longstanding topic of debate among historians concerns the ultimate objective of Ottoman conquests in the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries. Did the Ottomans even have a concrete vision that historians, following in the footsteps of the military strategists, might call a *grand strategy?* In Ottoman studies, having been inspired by earlier studies by Edward Luttwak, Geoffrey Parker and others (note, historians treat the conclusions of the former with reservations), Gábor Ágoston examined whether this model could be applied to Ottoman history. He concluded that a "grand strategy" would mean simply "a global vision on the geopolitics of states and their military, economic and cultural capabilities".[54] Such a vision determined the long-term policy of the Ottoman Empire and the mobilisation of economic and human resources for the achievement of policy objectives. According to Ágoston, however, it cannot be claimed that the Ottomans possessed a uniform strategy spanning centuries

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52 Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*. (Albany, 2003). Idem, 'Early Ottoman Period', in Metin Heper – Sabri Sayarı (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*. (London, 2012), 5–14.

53 Lowry, 'Early Ottoman Period', 8–10.

54 Ágoston, 'The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality to Empire', 107. Idem, 'Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman–Habsburg Rivalry', in Aksan – Goffman (eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans*, 76–77.

and explaining all their policy measures, for such a strategy could not have existed at the time of the early conquests given that the state had been just one of several actors. Instead, it is more accurate to speak of a number of strategies pursued by various rulers but sharing long-term features.[55] In Ágoston's view, under Sultan Süleyman (discussed in depth below), the palpable outlines of a "grand strategy" emerged. This strategy contained the following elements: a comprehensive ideology concerning the empire's universal mission; domestic and foreign intelligence gathering for the purpose of promoting the empire's integration into Europe; the dissemination of the self-image through appropriate foreign policies and propaganda; and the utilisation of the available economic and human resources for imperial objectives.[56]

In the absence of sources of similar depth to those relating to the age of Süleyman, we cannot know what the early rulers were thinking exactly when they decided to launch a military action or implemented a shift in policy. Yet, as I have already indicated, their actions and the thrust of their policies leave little doubt as to the presence of long-term considerations at an early stage. It seems to me that from the 1340s at the latest the Ottoman state – a relatively well-organised entity by that time – pursued a remarkably consistent and deliberate policy. Its immediate goals included: 1. the elimination of the minor states in the Balkans, 2. the ousting (or pushing back) of the Italian (Latin) trading states, 3. the subjugation of the Turcoman Muslim states

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55 For example: dynastic marriages, the integration of local elites and military organisations, a pragmatic and flexible approach to regional administration and taxation, and forced resettlement. Ágoston, 'The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality', 114–118. Idem, '"The Most Powerful' Empire: Ottoman Flexibility and Military Might', in Georg Zimmar – David Hicks (eds.), *Empires and Superpowers: Their Rise and Fall.* (Washington, D.C., 2005), 127–171, esp. 154–157.

56 Ágoston, 'The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality', 109, 123, 128. Idem, 'Information, Ideology', 77–103.

in Anatolia, and 4. the encirclement and gradual destruction of Byzantium and the capture of Constantinople.[57] By the end of the century, its successes had surpassed all expectations. To mention a few of the more spectacular victories: defeating the Serbian and Balkan coalitions at Černomen (1371) and Kosovo (1389); conquering Asia Minor (Anatolia) as far as the Kızıl Irmak river by 1390; reducing Byzantium, which was forced to pay an annual tax from 1371, to the capital and its surroundings; compelling Genoa and Venice to conclude an agreement and pursue cooperation with the Ottomans.[58]

Concerning the era of Murad I (1362–1389) and Bayezid I (1389–1402), the sources and documented events offer insights into the long-term goals. In this regard, it is particularly illuminating that in late 1394 Sultan Bayezid I assumed the title *sultanü'r-Rum* (ruler of [Eastern] Rome/Asia Minor). By using this title, which had earlier been employed by the sultans of Konya, Bayezid I wanted to show to the world that he considered himself heir to both the Seljuks and the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) emperors. It is therefore quite justified to assume that he wished to obtain or rebuild their respective empires.[59] The practical steps he took also confirm that he envisioned an empire stretching from the Danube to the

[57] A good summary of the events of the early Ottoman (and contemporaneous Balkan) history: John V. A. Fine, Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest.* (Ann Arbor, 1987). Ernst Werner, *Die Geburt einer Grossmacht – Die Osmanen (1300–1481). Ein Beitrag zur Genesis des türkischen Feudalismus.* (Weimar, 1985[4]). Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481.* (Istanbul, 1990). Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream. The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923.* (New York, 2005), 1–80.

[58] For the (far from constantly hostile) relations with the Italian city states, see Elisabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1305–1415).* (Venice, 1983), esp. 63–81 and Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State. The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey.* (Cambridge, 1999), esp. 4–12, 134–141.

[59] On this question, see Paul Wittek, 'Rum Sultanı', in *Batı Dillerinde Osmanlı Tarihi.* (İstanbul, 1971), 90–93. Cf. Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottoman*, 179–180.

THE GROWTH OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO 1566

Territorial expansion

- Ottoman lands, 1300
- Acquisitions until 1389
- Acquisitions between 1389 and 1481
- Acquisitions between 1481 and 1566
- **1541** Year of acquisition
- Vassal states
- Lands disputed with Persia

Scale 1:11,111,111

0 200 400 600 800 1000 km

Euphrates, which tallies with the main territory of the Eastern Roman Empire.[60] The plan came close to realisation in 1402, failing only temporarily because of Timur Lenk's offensive from the east and his victory over Bayezid. However, within a short time the Ottoman dynasty revived the idea of the empire as envisaged by Bayezid I, and from the reign of Mehmed II (1451–1481) in the latter half of the fifteenth century they made plans for Ottoman–Islamic rule of the whole world.[61] Having conquered the Near East in the early sixteenth century, they felt more motivated than ever to "restore" Alexander the Great's one-time world empire.

At this point, we must address another puzzling question: why did the Ottoman Empire pursue its conquests so consistently? The answers usually stress three factors: the incentive role of the holy war of Islam, the *jihad* (preferably *gaza* in Ottoman usage), the militarist nature of the state, and the importance of war spoils.[62] Without casting doubt on these explanations (and sometimes even corroborating them), in the following, I identify and analyse several underlying causes of the Ottoman Empire's wars and conquests.

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[60] Halil İnalcık, 'Bayezid I', in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. V. (İstanbul, 1992), 234. Cf. Speros Vryonis, Jr., 'The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–1970) 255–256.

[61] Osman Turan, *Türk Cihân Hâkimiyeti Mefkûresi Tarihi*. Vol. II. (İstanbul, 1969), 60–71.

[62] Halil İnalcık, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Empire', in M. A. Cook (ed. and introd.), *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730. Chapters from the Cambridge History of Islam and the New Cambridge Modern History by V. J. Parry, H. İnalcık, A. N. Kurat and J. S. Browley*. (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne), 1976, 31. İnalcık, 'The Emergence', 75–77.

Acquisition of booty and territory

Though it has been stated that booty played only a "localized role in Ottoman economic life",[63] domestic and foreign data demonstrate unequivocally the importance of this factor over a long period. Especially at the beginning, the war animated the entire society, and it had two main purposes: acquisition of land and securing a living, or, in the more fortunate cases, enrichment.[64]

The importance of booty-making

The chapter on jihad in a mid-fourteenth century work written in Turkish lists the main means of making a living as follows: 1. spoils from the *gaza*, 2. trading, 3. tilling the land, 4. craftsmanship.[65] The list suggests an order of importance, which cannot have been accidental in Western Anatolia at the time. Booty (mainly slaves) was amply procured and not only during the major imperial campaigns. In peacetime the frontier defence units were the providers, and since one fifth of the spoils were due to the state according to the religious law, this represented a continuous source of income.[66] Some data stemming from various periods can serve to illustrate the importance of goods obtained through warfare. First, according to the traditional Ottoman view, imperial mosques could only be built from booty acquired during a jihad (*gaza malı*). That is probably why so few

[63] Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World*, 100.

[64] Heath Lowry even calls the early Ottoman state a "predatory confederacy", cf. *The Nature*, 54, 57.

[65] Şinasi Tekin, 'XIV üncü Yüzyıla Ait Bir İlm-i Hâl: Risāletü'l-İslām', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 76 (1986) 286. Idem, 'XIV Yüzyılda Yazılmış Gazilik Tarikası 'Gâziliğin Yolları' Adlı Bir Eski Anadolu Türkçesi Metni ve Gazâ/Cihâd Kavramları Hakkında', *Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (1989) 156.

[66] Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'En marge d'un acte concernant le penğyek et les aqınğı', *Revue des Études Islamiques* 37 (1969) 21–48, esp. 35 ff.

sultanic mosques were built after 1566 when the sultans no longer took part in the campaigns, whereas in earlier periods one had been erected after the other.[67] Second, Georgius de Hungaria, who was held captive in the empire for twenty years in the middle of the fifteenth century, wrote that "throughout Turkey everyone shares the view that a man who manages to take a male or female slave will never know destitution again."[68] Third, the importance of slave trade in the Crimea is a well-known fact. As Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha noted in early 1528, the Ottoman state treasury had annual revenue of 30,000 gold coins from this trade[69] and in 1578 in Caffa income from slaves amounted to 4.5 million *akçe* (about 75,000 gold coins).[70] Fourth, it was from *gaza malı* (mainly from the price of slaves) that Grand Admiral Barbarossa Hayreddin Pasha paid the bulk of the costs of the fleet for the maritime campaign along the

[67] Peirce, *The Imperial Harem,* 189. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan,* 59–66, 68. For the social prestige garnered from the booty that was obtained from the infidels, see also Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World,* 100. War booty in general was a source of imperial pride and magnificence (for this reason selected precious objects were exhibited at celebrations in Istanbul); cf. for instance, Şahin, *Empire and Power,* 52.

[68] Georgius de Hungaria, *Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, condictionibus et nequicia Turcorum.* Értekezés a törökök szokásairól, viszonyai*ról és gonoszságáról 1438–1458* [Essay on the customs, conditions and wickedness of the Turks 1438–1458], in Lajos Tardy (ed.), *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* [Slaves, envoys and merchants on the Ottoman Empire]. Translated by Győző Kenéz. (Budapest, 1977), 69. For the original Latin text with a German translation, see Georgius de Hungaria, *Tractatus de moribus, condictionibus et nequicia Turcorum. Traktat über die Sitten, die Lebensverhältnisse und die Arglist der Türken.* Nach der Erstausgabe von 1481 herausgegeben, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Reinhard Klockow. (Schriften zur Landeskunde Siebenbürgens, Band. 15.) (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1993), 200–201.

[69] *Legatio Laszky apud Sultanum Solymannum anno 1527 functa. Actio Hieronymi Laszky apud Turcam nomine Regis Iohannis,* in Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (ed.), *Documente privitóre la Istoria Românilor.* Vol. II/1. (Bucuresci, 1891), 54.

[70] Halil İnalcık, 'Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire', in A. Asher – T. Halasi-Kun – B. K. Király (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern.* (Studies on Society in Change, 3.) (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1979), 39. Cf. Zübeyde Güneş Yağcı, 'İstanbul Gümrük Defterine Göre Karadeniz Köle Ticareti (1606–1607)', *History Studies* 3:2 (2011) 371–384.

shores of Italy and Corsica.[71] Fifth, the *beylerbeyi* of Buda was warned twice, in December 1589 and January 1590, to call the former agha of janissaries of Buda to the books as he owed the treasury 30,000 *guruş* (or, according to the second order, 35,000 *guruş*). The agha had received his office against a pledge that he would deliver this sum from the ransoms of prisoners. [72] The fact that an agha of janissaries of Buda undertook to pay roughly 20,000 gold coins from the slave trade in formal peacetime when the Ottoman expansion was at a standstill sheds light on the economic importance of looting – not so much for the quantity of goods it brought into circulation but for its dominant role in sustaining the military sector of society, which was often left to its own devices when making a living.[73]

Acquisition of land

Though tightly connected to the previous motive, this one is worth investigating separately. In my view, the Ottoman conquests can be pictured as an *avalanche*, whereby: 1. a neighbouring country is pillaged and looted first by the frontier defence units and then by the imperial army whereafter the spoils are channelled to the centre; 2. the area is then occupied, integrated into the empire and economically restored, whereupon its resources (prebends,

71 Halil Sahillioğlu, *Tokapı Sarayı Arşivi H. 951–952 Tarihli ve E–12321 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri.* (Osmanlı Devleti ve Medeniyeti Tarihi Serisi, 7.) (İstanbul, 2002), Nos. 180, 232, 285.

72 İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Mühimme defteri 66, 210/97, 504/233.

73 See the illuminating studies in a volume on the ransom industry along the Ottoman borders: Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Ransom Slavery.* In the fifteenth century, quite a few Ottoman soldiers who were stationed in Greece made a living from incursions into the territory of remote Hungary (*ibid.*, XIX, 18). In a treatise presented to Murad II in 1429 it is stated that "every year more or less fifty thousand male and female infidels are taken from the abode of war as captives". See Cemal Kafadar, 'A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum', in S. Bozdoğan – Gülru Necipoğlu (eds.), *History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the 'Lands of Rum'*, in *Muqarnas*, Special Issue, 24 (2007) 14.

tax farms, etc.) are put to the service of new contingents and new conquests, while the advanced frontier zone begins to supply booty to the centre from new areas. Two conclusions can be drawn from this state of affairs: 1. The first phase of the conquest is destructive (as it had been in the Seljuks), while the second, the phase of occupation with the Ottomans having taken a foothold, is comparatively tolerable.[74] 2. It is easy to see that in the long run the system is vulnerable: if the outsized machinery gets bogged down and expansion stops, this can lead to a shortage of resources as the crucial frontier zones begin to consume rather than supply, thereby overburdening the financial resources of the centre.

Social factors

As noted above, at first broad social strata were interested in the offensive campaigns. The latter turned into a popular venture involving the entire society and strongly resembling the raids of the Hungarians in Western Europe at the time of their settlement in the Carpathian Basin.

After a while, the "grass-roots" troops were replaced or supplanted by the professional army. In this phase, the motor of fighting was the army of slave origin. From the latter half of the fourteenth century the House of Osman pursued a policy of training prisoners-of-war and children collected under the *devşirme* system (a levy of Christian boys, introduced towards the end of the century) to produce a ruling elite of foreign origin

74 A meticulous study has demonstrated that 80–90% of the population of the County of Valkó between the Danube–Drava and Sava rivers was lost owing to Ottoman raids: Pál Engel, 'A török dúlások hatása a népességre: Valkó megye példája [The impact of Ottoman incursions on the population: the example of Valkó County]', *Századok* 134:2 (2000) 267–321, esp. 276, 280–282.

(*kul* in Turkish) that was loyal to the Ottoman House.[75] A noted intellectual of the sixteenth century, Mustafa Ali, argued that this governing elite was a particular and defining feature of the Ottoman Empire. He characterised the ruling class as a separate "race" *(kul cinsi)* and as a great invention of the sultans which had been developed consciously and whose members spoke a special language. He observed that there was not one distinguished Ottoman personality without Christian forebears. He described this ethnic mixture as the quintessential feature of Ottoman society; non-Muslims of the Balkans provided physical strength and beauty, while the Muslim intellectuals originating in the East provided the intellect, bringing Islamic high culture with them and teaching it to the inhabitants of "Rum", thereby turning the populace of the Ottoman Empire into a nation of culture.[76]

The decisive influence of the *kul*s had four important consequences.

1. The dynasty had a support base which it could employ to massively bring the society under state control (in a prudent manner, the leadership chose the would-be cadres of state administration and the army from among the poor strata and

[75] İnalcık, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Empire', 28. Idem, 'Ghulam', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New ed. Vol. II. (Leiden, 1983), 1086. İ. Metin Kunt, 'Turks in the Ottoman Imperial Palace', in Jeroen Duindam – Tülay Artan – Metin Kunt (eds.), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empire. A Global Perspective*. (Rulers and Elites. Comparative Studies in Governance, 1.) (Leiden, Boston, 2011), 289–301.

[76] Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire. The Historian Mustafa âli (1541–1600).* (Princeton, 1986), 253–257. On the *kul*, see also Christine Isom-Verhaaren, 'Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire', *Journal of Early Modern History* 8:1–2 (2004) 109–134. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 36–46. Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. (Stanford, California, 2011). For an original view on the "Turks" (which distinquishes between good trueborn Muslims and wicked "renegades"), see Gábor Kármán, 'Turks Reconsidered: Jakab Harsányi Nagy's Changing Image of the Ottoman', in Firges – Graf – Roth – Tulasoğlu (eds.), *Well-Connected Domains*, 110–130.

these men would constitute the basis of despotism as faithful servants of the rulers.)

2. This force did all in its power to hold the empire together and defend the dynasty under all circumstances, as its existence depended on the dynasty. This explains why the unity and coherence of the empire could be restored so quickly after grave domestic crises (for instance, in 1402, 1416, 1421–1422, 1511–1512).[77]

3. The *kul* class concentrated its energies on conquest since that provided a living: new prisoners-of-war and resources. Providing for the army of the court and the state apparatus was always costly, and the size of these groups steadily increased in the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries. Here one should note the frequently mentioned militarist nature of the state. In subsequent periods, this large force, this enormous military machinery had to be continuously engaged in external fighting lest it should cause internal disturbances, having become aware of its own strength.[78]

4. The *kul*s were quite tolerant towards subjugated Christians as the majority of its members were aware of their origins and knew and contacted their relatives (even if they had been captured as little children).[79] Therefore, their priority was not to convert

77 For the unifying, consolidating and expansion-inspiring role of the *kul*s, see the career of Grand Vizier Bayezid in the early fifteenth century: Michel Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée dans les Balkans ottomans. Vie du Cheikh Bedreddîn le „Hallâj des Turcs" (1358/59–1416)*. (Cahiers du Bosphore, 12.) (Istanbul, 1995), 87–88. Cf. Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks by Doukas.* An annotated translation of "Historia Turco-Byzantina" by Harry J. Magoulias. (Detroit, 1975), 128–131.

78 As happened in 1525–26, 1593 or 1683 when one (of several) reasons to launch a campaign was to remove the soldiers from Istanbul. Cf. Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600*. (London, 1973), 49. Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy', 282–283.

79 Ibrahim Metin Kunt, 'Ethnic-Regional *(Cins)* Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974) 233–239. Pál Fodor, 'Török és oszmán: Az oszmán rabszolgaelit azonosságtudatáról [Turk and Ottoman. The sense of identity within the Ottoman elite of slave origin]',

the Christians, but to involve as many as possible in warfare, the main activity of the Ottoman state. By the fifteenth century, the use of Christians in warfare had become unusually widespread. With some exaggeration, it can be said that half the Balkans had been integrated in some form and under some name (*eflak, martolos, voynuk, akıncı, derbendci, şahinci,* etc.) in the Ottoman war machinery, whereas Latin Europe had gradually abandoned medieval military forms.[80] Hence, not only the *kul*s, the ruling elite, but also the subordinated Muslim and even parts of the Christian societies became interested as beneficiaries of the system and the wars that supported it.[81] Cooperation was also facilitated by the peculiar forms of Islam in the Balkans. The dominance of Sunni orthodoxy was for a long time unknown among ordinary people; what spread among them was a kind of syncretic *Euro-Balkan Islam* characterised by common cultic places, saints, churches, animal sacrifice and baptism widespread

Történelmi Szemle 37:4 (1995) 367–383. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 42–43. For a recent discussion of the subject (with debatable conclusions), see Graf, 'Of Half-Lives and Double-Lives', 131–149. – It is important to note that European travellers and diplomats considered the *kul*s of slave origin more relentless enemies of the European Christianity than the trueborn Turks.

80 Klára Hegyi, 'Magyar és balkáni katonaparasztok a budai vilájet déli szandzsákjaiban [Hungarian and Balkan peasant soldiers in the southern sanjaks of the vilayet of Buda]', *Századok* 135:6 (2001) esp. 1255–1272. Pál Fodor, 'Ottoman Warfare, 1300–1453', in Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey,* Vol. I, 192–226.

81 A fine example of cooperation between a *kul* and his Christian relatives can be found in the following order of the imperial council sent to the district governor of Sirem and the *kadı* of Varadin (Hung. Pétervárad) on June 9, 1573: "Now you, who are the *sancakbeyi* of Sirem, have sent a letter to let us know that the *zimmi* called Istepan, son of Petko from the village of Radiç in the judicial district of Varadin belonging to the district of Sirem is actually the brother of Hasan Bey, the *sancakbeyi* of Kırk Kilise, and besides, he is useful, making efforts to increase the wealth of the treasury, he is a respectable *zimmi* worthy of protection. An application was submitted that I should issue a noble deed to him that would exempt him similarly to the rest of the Muslims from the legal tithes and traditional taxes, as well as the compulsory labour to be rendered. I therefore order that Istepan, son of Petko be exempt not only from the poll tax and the tithes, but also from labour service and war-tax... When you have seen my noble order, forward it to his hands..." (İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, D.EVM 26278, 193).

in both religious communities, and a general reverence of sacred fountains rooted in Seljuk times, etc.[82] In addition, for economic reasons the state sought to keep the defeated Christians in their previous positions, for, according to an Ottoman chronicler at the end of the sixteenth century, even the sultan realised that "for the treasury, the infidel is the most useful".[83]

Domestic stabilising function of the campaigns

With the expansion of the empire and the pushing out of the frontiers, the assertion of the will of the central power in distant areas encountered an ever-increasing number of obstacles. It also required increased efforts from the sultanic army to reach the borders and the land of the enemy. The advances, however, afforded the ruler and the dignitaries of the country a chance to gain insights into the situation of the area and the main concerns of the population. Local leaders in such areas (*kadı*s, *bey*s, magistrates of towns, leaders of guilds) were expected to seek out the sultan and give him presents, who also granted them gifts in return. Such reciprocal and symbolic actions also took place between the sultan and the rank and file of the army (sometimes producing the most absurd situations), mainly during spectacular parades staged with the participation of the ruler. The presence of leading officials and workers accompanying the army, as well as the temporary coincidence of the military and civil requirements resulted in the realisation of

[82] Michel Balivet, *Romanie byzantine et pays de Rum turc. Histoire d'un espace d'imbrication gréco-turque.* (Istanbul, 1994).

[83] Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî*. Hazırlayan Mehmet İpşirli. Vol. I. İstanbul, 1989, 410. Cf. Pál Fodor, 'The Ottomans and their Christians in Hungary', in Eszter Andor – István György Tóth (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400–1750.* (Budapest, 2001), 137–147. Antal Molnár, *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie ottomane 1572–1647.* (Biblioteca Academiae Hungariae – Roma. Studia, I.) (Rome, Budapest, 2007), 17–23.

long-needed public works. Several welfare institutions (charity kitchens, caravanserais, *medreses*, etc.) were founded (or built quickly), roads were cleaned and bridges repaired. The brigades rounded up and liquidated robbers and other criminals in the neighbourhood, thereby strengthening law and order – which was important for both sides. Thus, the campaigns and advances had a dual function: on the one hand, they intensified solidarity between the commanders and the common soldiers and between the elite and society both practically and symbolically, and on the other, they strengthened the authority of the central power. The latter purpose was also served by the practice of appointing staff: it favoured those who applied for posts in the camp and who consequently carried out the orders of the centre more ardently – at least at the beginning.[84] The assurance of domestic peace and the demonstration of the might and potency of the state and ruler, were particularly important functions of the war around the turn of the seventeenth century, though earlier instances can also be adduced.[85]

Psychological functions

Incessant victories over the Christians and the unstoppable decline of adversaries became the decisive collective experience

[84] The abovesaid is chiefly based on a description of the campaign of 1596 by Abdulkadir Efendi; see *Topçular Kâtibi ʿAbdülkādir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi (Metin ve Tahlîl).* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, III/21.) Vol. I. Yayına hazırlayan Ziya Yılmazer. (Ankara, 2003), 98–142.

[85] For instance, in 1537 (Rhoads Murphey, 'Suleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary: Ottoman Manifest Destiny or a Delayed Reaction to Charles V's Universalist Vision', *Journal of Early Modern History* 5:3 [2001] 206–207), during Süleyman's Iranian wars (Christine Woodhead, 'Perspectives on Süleyman', in Metin Kunt – Christine Woodhead [eds.], *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age. The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*. [London, New York, 1995], 168–169) or in 1570–71 (Vera Zimányi, *Lepanto, 1571.* [Budapest, 1983], 108–113). Of course, the villages and towns through which the armies passed were required to give as well as to receive: they had to bear the extra burden of supplying the army (services, taxes in kind, etc.).

of fifteenth-century Ottoman society. The spectacular successes inspired self-confidence and a certain sense of superiority even in the lower social strata. The contemporary Georgius de Hungaria, who knew the world of the Ottomans better than anyone else and recorded his personal experiences with a rare lack of prejudice, wrote that all this "confirms them and makes them lastingly strong in their sect... they call themselves 'victors'... Besides, they take pride in abusively calling the Christians women and themselves their masters."[86]

In constrast to such Ottoman self-assurance, the Christians in the Balkans displayed signs of emotional breakdown, responding to the Ottoman advancement as could be expected on the basis of Ibn Khaldun's observations: the continuous triumphs of the foe convinced many of the superiority of the God of the Muslims.[87] Michel Balivet cites the words of a Greek priest from the *Saltukname* (latter half of the fifteenth century) which convey with remarkable pungency this experience: the Turks chased the Greeks away from their lands, so probably they would drive them out of Paradise as well.[88] As Georgius de Hungaria noted, most captured Christians also felt that "God had abandoned them".[89] The interpretation of wars and conquests as collective or sacred goals (for example, as in the

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86 Georgius de Hungaria, *Incipit,* 85 and *Tractatus,* 240–241.

87 Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History.* (Bollingen Series, 48.) Vols. I–III. Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal. (New York, London, 1958), chapter II/22 (cf. Ibn Khaldún, *Bevezetés a történelembe (Al-muqaddima)* [An introduction to history]. Translated from the Arabic original and commentaries by Róbert Simon. [Budapest, 1995], 159): "The vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive mark(s), his dress, his occupation, [his religion] and all his other conditions and customs. ... Therefore, the vanquished can always be observed to assimilate themselves to the victor in the use and style of dress, mounts, and weapons, indeed, in everything."

88 Michel Balivet, 'Aux origines de l'islamisation des Balkans ottomans', *Revue de Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 66:4 (1992) 13.

89 Georgius de Hungaria, *Incipit,* 69 and *Tractatus,* 200–201.

legend of the "golden apple") largely contributed to reinforcing social cohesion.[90]

Jihad

There are recurrent disputes in Ottoman scholarly literature on the possible role of the doctrine of jihad in the Ottoman expansion. To this day, many believe that it was one of the most important motives and even ultimate cause of the creation and ascendancy of the empire.[91] While I think this is an exaggeration, I must modify my earlier position and acknowledge that the religious duty of jihad was an important element in Ottoman state ideology, one that was not used exclusively for the subsequent justification and sanctification of secular wars. I cannot expand further here, but I would stress that the decisive circles of the Ottoman Empire interpreted jihad for a long time similarly to Molla Hüsrev, who summarised it in his "manual" written in the 1470s (and used in *medrese*s and *kadı* courts for centuries).[92] His

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90 Fodor, 'Ungarn und Wien', 81–98.

91 For a thorough historiographic review, see Kafadar, *Between*, 29–59. See further Lowry, *The Nature*, esp. 1–13 (Lowry argues strongly against the jihad/*gaza* theory, even its "moderate" version as formulated by Kafadar) and Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory*, 1–14.

92 Molla Husrev, *Kaynaklarıyla Büyük İslam Fıkıhı – Gurer ve Dürer Tercümesi (İslâm Fıkhı ve Hukûku)*. Mütercimi: Arif Erkan. Vol. II. (Istanbul, 1979), 3–42. It is important to note that the fourteenth-century text published by Tekin, which is written in simple Turkish summing up the *gaza* for the ordinary people, perfectly harmonizes with Molla Husrev's (and the *ulema*'s) concept of jihad with the exception of a few tenets (e.g. the question of the fifth), so it seems that there was no great difference between the popular and orthodox concepts of the holy war. In some of his writings Colin Imber asserted the contrary (see, for example, his 'Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History', in Kunt – Woodhead [eds.], *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, 138–153, esp. 141–146), but later on he subscribed to the above view. See Colin Imber, 'What Does a Ghazi Actually Mean?', in Çigdem Balım-Harding – Colin Imber (eds.), *The Balance of Truth. Essays in Honour of Prof. Geoffrey Lewis*. (Istanbul, 2000), 165–178. Idem, 'Fiqh for Beginners. An Anatolian Text on Jihād', in G. R. Hawting – J. A. Mojaddedi – A. Samely (eds.), *Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Texts and Traditions in Memory of Norman Calder*. (Oxford, 2000), 137–148.

conception did not differ in essentially from that of classic Sunni orthodoxy, its main tenets being: 1. Jihad is "religious practice" and "worship" *(ibadet)*, and as such it is compulsory *(vacib)* like the other rituals (the five fundamental obligations) constituting Islam. In normal cases, jihad is incumbent on the society as a whole, and where there is great danger everyone is personally obliged to take part. Abandoning it is a sin, and so peace is an abnormal state as it means the suspension of jihad. 2. The aim of jihad is "exalting the word of Allah" *(ila-i kelimetullah)*, the strengthening of religion and the enforcement of religious law *(şeriat)*. Jihad is punishment for unbelieving, whereby the infidels are servants of the Muslims and their goods are the goods of Muslims. A religious war can also be waged against Muslims to ward off domestic chaos or rebellion. 3. Jihad is not simply a war or state of conflict; it is much more: an all-embracing principle of organisation that determines taxation, land ownership and the position of religious minorities, etc. after a conquest.[93]

The "*gazi* ideology", regarded by some scholars as a specific feature of the Ottoman Empire,[94] did not represent a unique, novel interpretation of jihad, even if opinions may vary on the question of supreme authority. As Şinasi Tekin pointed out, the offensive war launched in the name of the religious community was called *gaza* (the participants were *gazi*s) in the Ottoman Empire, while the defensive war binding on all individually was called jihad (the general mobilisation it implied was called *nefir-i am*). This distinction, in effect for a long time, precisely tallies with the concepts *farz kifaya* and *farz ayn* of Islamic religious law.[95] One must look elsewhere for Ottoman specificities. One

93 Cf. Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud. The Islamic Legal Tradition*. (Edinburgh, 1997), 68–69.

94 This position, which is mistaken in my view, is also taken by James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*. (Pennsylvania, 1997), 151–157.

95 Tekin, 'Gazilik Tarikası', 140–143. The only deviation may be that some also call the war against Muslims hindering the holy war *farz ayn*. Cf. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı*

peculiarity is that from the mid–sixteenth century we see a disruption of conceptual consistency with the offensive war also being called jihad and the required (personal, material) contribution also being interpreted as *farz ayn*. This seems to have been linked with the consolidation of orthodoxy and the growing sunnitisation of the empire and reduction in the fighting zeal of society.[96] Another feature is that jihad, as the collective "religious practice" of society, took shape in spectacular communal prayers. While the warriors were brandishing their weapons against the foe on the battlefield, the population left at home supported the fighters and performed their duties to God in the *cami*s and mosques through ritual prayers of supplication (*dua, hacet namazı, tazarru*) under the guidance of the religious leaders.[97] Although not everyone took part in these large collective events with full enthusiasm, yet it is incontestable that – at least until the end of the seventeenth century – the majority of the Ottoman state and society regarded the war against Christianity as a religious war, practising and experiencing it as such ritually. As Georgius de Hungaria wrote: "They try to defend their sect with swords and weapons ... instead of logical arguments and reasoning. They do so because, as they claim,

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Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15.–17. Yüzyıllar). (Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 60.) (İstanbul, 1998), 101–102.

96 Pál Fodor, 'A terjeszkedés ideológiái az Oszmán Birodalomban [The ideologies of expansion in the Ottoman Empire]', in Idem, *A szultán és az aranyalma. Tanulmányok az oszmán-török történelemről* [The sultan and the golden apple. Studies in Ottoman history]. (Budapest, 2001), 173. Viorel Panaite argues similarly (*The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers*. [East European Monographs, DLXII.] [New York, 2000], 93–94), but he dates this change to the great wars at the end of the seventeenth century. In my cited article I mention an example from 1571.

97 The relevant data are included in my forthcoming study: *The Doctrine of Jihad in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Empire*. Cf. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 66–67. My conclusions support, and even verify in a general sense, what Barbara Flemming has found about the sultans' ritual prayers (mainly on the basis of narrative sources): 'The Sultan's Prayer before Battle', in Colin Heywood – Colin Imber (eds.), *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*. (Istanbul, 1994), 63–75.

they have been ordered to do so by their law."[98] It is wrong to pit this position against the stance of some (often criticised at the time) that regarded the holy war as an opportunity for looting. The two complemented, rather than opposed, one another. Indeed, pillaging was a concomitant and legitimate act of jihad, provided that the rules of distribution were observed. When, therefore, the rulers encouraged the population to take part in the wars called *gaza* and jihad by promising prospective spoils, they acted in a perfectly legitimate manner, in consideration of the interests of religion, state and individual alike.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND HUNGARY: THE FIRST PHASE

Neither the aforementioned factors, nor the fifteenth-century Ottoman political and military realities leave any doubt that the Porte attacked Hungary with the aim of occupying its territory.[99] This is indisputable even though we have just one piece of indirect information about the Ottoman state's intentions in this regard. It is a fictitious story that demands our attention because it stems from the times prior to the Ottoman conquest, from the turn of the sixteenth century, and contains political plans for the future in the form of prophecies (thus presumably it does not project events that had already taken place onto the past with legitimising intentions, a frequent device in Turkish sources).

The anonymous chronicle states that, in 1481, fishermen caught in the Danube the sword that had been dropped in by a man named Byzantin (the son of the legendary builder of

[98] Georgius de Hungaria, *Incipit*, 128 and *Tractatus*, 368–369.

[99] On the Ottoman advance, see Szakály, 'Phases of Turco–Hungarian Warfare', 65–111. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481*, passim.

Byzantium) during his flight. It had an inscription that no one could decipher, so the Hungarian king gifted it to the envoy of Sultan Bayezid II. A man mastering Syriac in the sultan's court deciphered the inscription and the identity of its owner became known. When Sultan Bayezid learnt about it, he said: "Praised be God, my deceased father conquered the town of Islambol [Istanbul], and the sword of Şeddad has come to me from the province of Ungurus. So it can be hoped that by this sword it [Hungary] will be my property by the grace of Allah – may he be exalted! –, or my sons will occupy the land of Ungurus."[100]

The leaders of fifteenth-century Hungary were presumably well aware of the ultimate goal of the menacing great power in their neighbourhood, even without knowing this story, which was perhaps just one of many. What could they do to forestall the danger? Reviewing the possibilities of the age, one may glean seven kinds of measure that could be applied alternately and in different combinations.

1. *Organising or supporting crusades.* Such endeavours include the battle of Nikopol (1396), the "long campaign" (1443–44), the defence of Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade (1456), joining the League of Cambrai (1510) and the lasting cooperation with Venice and Poland. The final balance sheet of these endeavours is disastrous for the Hungarians. In the early sixteenth century, mainly after the Venetian–Ottoman and Polish–Ottoman compromises, crusades were ruled out as a possible tool.[101]

2. *Offensive campaigns in the Balkans.* Several such actions took place during the first half of Sigismund of Luxemburg's

[100] Friedrich Giese, *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken*. Vol. I. (Breslau, 1922), 88, Vol. II. (Leipzig, 1925), 117–118.

[101] Cf. Carl Göllner, 'Zur Problematik der Kreuzzüge und Türkenkriege im 16. Jahrhundert', *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 13 (1975) 97–115. An excellent summary of the events in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with relation to the "Turkish question": Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*. Vols. I–IV. (Philadephia, 1976–1984).

THE ADVANCE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 1362–1541

- Line of Ottoman advance in 1400
- Line of Ottoman advance in 1500
- Line of Ottoman advance in 1541
- Ottoman fortress in 1500
- Hungarian border fortress in 1500

reign (1387–1437), but with the weakening of the Hungarian state, the campaigns decreased. The last significant, but sporadic, attempts are linked with János Hunyadi. Subsequently, there were only small-scale and occasional (sometimes revenging) raids.[102]

3. *Building out buffer states (ring of vassals)* beyond Hungary's southern and south-eastern frontiers. Such attempts were variably successful, but by the latter half of the fifteenth century, all the buffer states except for the north-western parts of Bosnia had fallen under Ottoman domination or influence (Serbia: 1459, southern Bosnia: 1463–64, Wallachia and Moldavia: middle and last third of the century).[103]

4. *Transformation of the military organisation and the frontier defence.* Major and lasting results were achieved by organising and continuously reforming the defences of the southern borders, which began during Sigismund's reign and went on until the battle of Mohács (1526). The central elements of the defensive system included:[104]

a) The nobility's participation in fighting, extending the "noble insurrection" beyond the borders of the coontry, organising the "militia portalis" (1397) and employing professional mercenaries (*hussars*, *vojnik*s, frontier castle garrisons).

b) Constructing a double line of border fortresses in the south with Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade at its centre. The project also began under Sigismund (in 1427) and culminated during the reign of Matthias Corvinus (around 1476–79) when, including

[102] So far the most systematic description of the Ottoman–Hungarian wars is Szakály, 'Phases of Turco–Hungarian Warfare', 65–111.

[103] Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 548 ff. Panaite, *The Ottoman Law*, 156–168.

[104] Géza Pálffy, 'The Origins and Development of the Border Defence System Against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary (Up to the Early Eighteenth Century)', in Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs*, 7–13. András Kubinyi, 'The Battle of Szávaszentdemeter–Nagyolaszi (1523). Ottoman Advance and Hungarian Defence on the Eve of Mohács', in Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs*, 72–88.

Transylvania, three centres of command were created. In 1521 attempts were made to modernise the network (replacing the noblemen's troops with mercenaries), but for lack of money the previous system was restored in 1523. The network of border fortresses and the hinterland were capable of holding up the Ottoman attacks, but by the early sixteenth century the situation had become critical. A broad strip of the border area had been devastated. The much-weakened Hungarian forces were forced back to their lines, except for in Jajce, Bosnia, which was encircled by Ottoman fortresses. Poorly armed, they faced the threat of an Ottoman invasion that was looming ever larger.

5. *Concluding peaces or armistices*. From the early fifteenth century onwards, the Hungarian leadership regularly signed short-term peace agreements with the Ottoman Empire, whenever such ambitions coincided with those of the sultan's court. The agreement of 1483 is often regarded as the starting point, but in fact some thirty truces there had earlier been signed by representatives of the two sides.[105] However, these were *treuga*s, that is, temporary cease-fires and not real agreements. Though they forestalled imperial campaigns, they usually offered no protection against raiders in the border zone. The *banate* of Srebernik, for example, also fell during such a period in 1512. It did not help that during the reign of Matthias (1458–1490) for political reasons Ottoman troops were permitted by treaty to pass through Hungary and thus cause destruction in the Austrian territories. On the eve of the battle of Mohács the general opinion in Central Europe was that an agreement with the Porte was the surest way to perdition.[106]

105 See Sándor Papp, 'Hungary and the Ottoman Empire', in Zombori (ed.), *Fight against the Turk*, 37–89.

106 Ferenc Szakály, *A mohácsi csata* [The battle of Mohács]. (Budapest, 1975), 110–111. András Kubinyi, 'A magyar állam belpolitikai helyzete Mohács előtt [The domestic political situation of the Hungarian state before Mohács]', in Lajos Rúzsás – Ferenc Szakály (eds.), *Mohács. Tanulmányok a mohácsi csata 450. évfordulója alkalmából*

6. *Cooperation in, or unification, of Central Europe*. Hungary's leaders were quick to realise that the country was unable to defend itself alone. Cooperation among the states of the region and a union of forces were mentioned as options quite early on. The first attempt was the Hungarian–Polish personal union (1440–44).[107] King Matthias took steps to build an empire under the House of Hunyadi, but after his death only two of the rival dynasties remained on the scene: the Habsburgs and the Jagiellonians. At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Jagiellonians had the upper hand, but although they acquired the thrones of Hungary and Bohemia in addition to that of Poland, this entailed no palpable advantages for Hungary.[108] As mentioned earlier, the Poles gave up fighting against the Turks after they suffered a defeat and when they became encircled by a coalition composed of the Habsburgs, the Teutonic Knights and Russia. Consequently, after Venice's change of strategy, Hungary was left alone to face the Porte.[109] The outbreak of the Italian war and the new rivalry for the supremacy in Europe added to Hungary's isolation.

[Mohács. Studies on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the battle of Mohács]. (Budapest, 1986), 65.

107 Krzysztof Baczkowski, 'Idea jagiellońska a stosunki polsko–węgerskie w XV wieku', in Idem, *Polska i jej sasiedzi za Jagiellonów*. (Kraków, 2012), 131–144.

108 Cf. Krzysztof Baczkowski, 'Die jagiellonische Versuch einer Großreichbildung um 1500 und die türkische Bedrohung', in Ferdinand Seibt – Winfried Eberhard (Hrsg.), *Europa 1500. Integrationsprozesse im Widerstreit. Staaten, Regionen, Personenverbände, Christenheit*. (Stuttgart, 1987), 433–444.

109 Marian Biskup, 'Die polnische Diplomatie in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. und in den Anfängen des 16. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 26 (1978) 171, 173–178. Ilona Czamańska, 'Poland and Turkey in the First Half of the 16th Century – Turning Points', in Zombori (ed.), *Fight against the Turk*, 91–101. Cf. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland–Lithuania: International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents*. (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Edited by Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İnalcık and Boğaç Ergene. Vol. 47.) (Leiden, Boston, 2011), 21 ff.

7. *Looking for eastern allies that might threaten the Ottomans from behind*. In Central European diplomacy, Sigismund was the first Hungarian king to employ this device when he sent envoys to Kara Yülük, chief of the Akkoyunlu federation. Later other European powers followed suite, but apart from the Karaman–Hungarian cooperation in the 1440s, these connections brought about no relief for threatened Hungary.[110]

By the turn of the sixteenth century, the balance of power had tilted massively in favour of the Ottomans. Had they launched a frontal attack then, they would have been able to defeat medieval Hungary in 1510 or 1514 rather than in 1526. The delay was primarily due to the advent of Safavid Iran and to Ottoman domestic movements that were closely linked with the Iranian *(kızılbaş)* threat.[111] It was vital for the Ottoman state to respond adequately to this challenge in politics, religion and legitimacy, as its power position in the Near East and its role within Islam were at stake. The handling of this issue – the war against Iran and the ensuing conflicts – gave a respite to weakened Hungary. Although ultimately it could not evade Ottoman conquest, it was tremendously lucky on one count. During Sultan Selim's (1512–1520) engagement in the Near East the dynastic strife in Central Europe was settled conclusively in favour of the Habsburgs.[112] With marriage contracts, the dynasty laid the foundations for its subsequent intervention in Hungary.

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[110] On the eastern relations of the Hungarians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Lajos Tardy, *Beyond the Ottoman Empire. 14th–16th Century Hungarian Diplomacy in the East.* (Studia Uralo-Altaica, 13.) Translated by János Boris. (Szeged, 1978). Cf. Barbara von Palombini, *Bündniswerben Abendländischer Mächte um Persien 1453–1600.* (Freiburger Islamstudien, Bd. 1). (Wiesbaden, 1968).

[111] Hanna Sohrweide, 'Der Sieg der Safaviden in Persien und seine Rückwirkung auf die Schiiten Anatoliens im 16. Jahrhundert', *Der Islam* 41 (1965) 95–223.

[112] Zsuzsanna Hermann, *Az 1515. évi Habsburg–Jagelló szerződés. Adalék a Habsburgok magyarországi uralmának előtörténetéhez* [The Habsburg–Jagiellonian agreement of 1515. Addenda to the prehistory of the Habsburgs' rule in Hungary]. (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből. Új sorozat, 21.) (Budapest, 1961), esp. 47–53. Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der*

Indeed, in the early 1520s, it took control of the Croatian frontier defence in place of the Hungarian king.[113] Thus, when the Ottomans deployed all their might against Central Europe, they were encountered not only by Hungarians in Hungary. Had the country failed to get this respite, it would probably have suffered a greater territorial loss, since the Habsburgs were far less prepared to withstand an offensive at that time than after Mohács. In fact, the aforementioned constellation was upheld throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the existence of the Safavid state by itself, without close or direct European–Persian alliances, was an enormous help to Hungary and Austria, as the offensives in the east interrupted the advance of the Ottomans in Central Europe at crucial moments (1533, mid–1540s, 1603, etc.).[114]

But there is another side to the coin: while nascent Central Europe may have gained a temporary breathing space, the prospective foe gained unprecedented strength. After defeating the Safavids, Sultan Selim subjugated Syria, Palestine and Egypt. These new provinces broght the empire huge financial benefits in the short run with their profuse human and material resources and they deepened the Islamic character of the empire, as for the first time Muslims formed a majority of the population.[115]

Wende zur Neuzeit. Band IV. Gründung des habsburgischen Weltreiches. Lebensabend und Tod 1508–1519. (Wien, 1981), 154–220.

113 Pálffy, 'The Origins', 14–15.

114 Fodor, 'The Impact', 41–51.

115 Heath Lowry, 'The 'Soup Muslims' of the Balkans: Was There a 'Western' and 'Eastern' Ottoman Empire?', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 36 (2010) 97–134. Idem, 'Early Ottoman Period', 12–13.

THE ACCESSION OF SÜLEYMAN AND THE WESTERN TURN IN OTTOMAN POLITICS

In the early hours of September 22, 1520, Sultan Selim died and his throne was taken by his only son, Süleyman I. This news was met with relief both in the Ottoman capital and provinces and in the royal courts of Europe. Both the Ottoman subjects and their Christian opponents looked forward to the new sultan's rule, but they did so for different reasons. In the Ottoman Empire, there was rare agreement among members of the elite and the broad masses of subjects concerning the need to terminate Selim's maniacal eastern policy; they could hardly wait to see the end of the wars fought against fellow Muslims and the associated domestic discord. For their part, the Europeans, who had greatly feared – for no reason, as it turned out – the warlike Selim, felt that Süleyman's enthronement would mark the beginning of a period of peaceful co-existence between Christendom and Islam. This hope seemed to be well founded, having been nurtured by Venetian diplomacy – so well versed in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. In October 1520, Tomaso Contarini, *bailo* in Istanbul, reported to Venice (the Venetians then forwarded his conclusion to the major European courts) that in all likelihood the new sultan would be peaceful, as "he has just and perfect attributes". On hearing the news, Pope Leo X stated with relief that in the future Christians could feel secure.[116] In early 1521 the Venetians dispatched further reports of the sultan's peaceful nature, but within a few months it became clear that the city-state's diplomats had made a fatal miscalculation. In the very

[116] Alberto Tenenti, 'La formation de l'image de Soliman à Venise (1520–1530 env.)', in Gilles Veinstein (publ.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps. Süleyman the Magnificent and His Time. Acte du Colloque de Paris. Galeries Nationales de Grand Palais. 7–10 mars 1990.* (Paris, 1992), 43.

first year of his reign, Süleyman implemented sweeping changes in Ottoman policy. He ended the eastern campaigns and turned all his attention to Central Europe. In place of the standing war that had been fought by Ottoman and Hungarian border forces for much of the preceding fifty or sixty years, the new sultan initiated a series of attacks by imperial troops. It seemed as though Süleyman wished to return to the era of the great European conquests in the fifteenth century. The initial strikes were directed against Hungary, but by the end of the decade the conflict had spread to the border regions of neighbouring Austria.

There is no consensus among historians concerning Süleyman's military efforts and his strategic ideas. Scholars once regarded the sultan as a deliberate conqueror and aggressor, while the Hungarians and Habsburgs were seen as the defensive party.[117] More recently, an increasing number of historians have expressed doubts, arguing that it is difficult to perceive deliberate planning on the part of Süleyman.[118] Many have questioned whether he really wanted to occupy Central and Western Europe and whether he can be described as a ruler with an ardent wish to conquer because, clearly, this is very difficult to prove. Several scholars have probed into the issue of the "radius of action", meaning that allegedly Central Europe (Hungary) lay outside the area in which the Ottomans could conduct successful wars in view of the transport and technical conditions of the era.[119] Others have tended to infer from concrete political and military

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[117] For instance, Nicolae Jorga, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches. Nach den Quellen dargestellt. Zweiter Band (bis 1538).* (Gotha, 1909), 350, 356. Cf. İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 34–36.

[118] See for example, Káldy-Nagy, 'Suleimans Angriff auf Europa', 165. Jean Bérenger, *Histoire de l'Empire des Habsbourgs.* (Paris, 1990), 209–219.

[119] William H. McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500–1800.* (Chicago, London, 1964), 41–42, 50. Vernon J. Parry, 'The Reign of Sulaimān the Magnificent', in Cook (ed.), *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*, 84–85. Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 78–80.

measures and a few sources that Süleyman did not originally seek to conquer Hungary (except for making it his vassal). In their view, it was the Habsburgs who forced him to do so.[120] According to a recent hypothesis, the incessant fight against the "infidels" and Charles V representing the Christian world, was merely a (self) image created by the political propaganda of the sultan's court, a legitimising ideology in which the "ideal ruler" became the "militant sultan".[121] The most extreme variant of this conception claims that Süleyman had no elaborate strategy for Europe; he did not want to conquer it but merely responded to the "provocations" of Hungarians and Habsburgs.[122] Meanwhile, the sultan's opponent, Charles V has also become a victim of similar "deheroisation". A recent interpreter of the emperor's policies declared that the fight against Ottoman expansion, the halting of Süleyman, and the incessant fight between the two religions was only a myth, a false picture created by propaganda, just like in the case of the Ottoman ruler: "During the reign of Charles V imperial propaganda created an image of the emperor as a Christian monarch who confronted the Ottoman sultan and stopped his advance through Europe and the Mediterranean. The monarch himself personally contributed to this myth in his *Memorias* when he affirmed that 'the Turk who wanted to

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[120] Gilles Veinstein, 'La politique hongroise de Sultan Süleymân et d'Ibrâhîm pacha à travers deux lettres de 1534 au roi Sigismond de Pologne", in Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont – İlber Ortaylı – Emeri van Donzel (eds.), *CIÉPO … VII. Sempozyumu Bildirileri. Peç: 7–11 Eylül 1986.* (Ankara, 1994), 333–380.

[121] Cf. Imber's and Woodhead's cited studies ('Perspectives on Süleyman', 164–190, esp. 167 ff).

[122] Murphey, 'Suleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary', 199: "All his interventions north of the Danube during the first two decades of his reign came in response to provocations emanating from neighbouring states." In Murphey's view, the rule of the Ottomans in the Balkans depended on the sultan's protection of the local Orthodox Christian subjects from the danger of Latin domination. Still, a frontal attack against the Latin West would have alienated them and so the sultan could not risk this (*ibid.*). One may ask: if the Orthodox subjects were happy to be protected, would they not have been even happier to see the Latins put down conclusively? Murphey advanced similar views in his *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700.* (London, 1999), 1–11.

approach Vienna … returned to Constantinople with great loss ... this was the beginning and from here on out his strength would decrease.' Perpetuating 16th-century propaganda, current Spanish historiography continues to sustain the thesis that the Spanish monarchy and the Ottoman Empire were in constant confrontation during the first half of the 16th century. Nevertheless, in the final balance of his kingdom, the triumph of the eastern over western power on the continent and sea, as well as the limited amount of warfaring that actually went on between these two Mediterranean sovereigns, becomes evident."[123]

If the historian were to take all these new statements or opinions seriously, he would clearly run into trouble. He would have two protagonists fighting wars throughout their lives as monarchs with claims to "universal sovereignty", organising armies and fleets year by year, and spending incredible amounts of money, only because – in terms of this interpretation – they misunderstood each other's intentions. Or, to stay with the Ottoman side, he would have to accept that an Ottoman ruler, and quite an able one, too, marched from Istanbul to Buda and Vienna several times in response to "provocations" (1526, 1529, 1541, 1543), or, as has been recently claimed, that he marched to the Austrian border with immense efforts merely to show off his wealth, might and regalia in military parades on the way.[124]

What shoud be the position of the historian who is not willing to regard the two mightiest rulers of the age as fools? As

[123] Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, 'Charles V and the Ottoman War from the Spanish Point of View', *Eurasian Studies* 1:2 (2002) 161.

[124] Gábor Ágoston, 'Ideologie, Propaganda und politischer Pragmatismus. Die Auseinandersetzung der osmanischen und habsburgischen Großmächte und die mitteleuropäische Konfrontation', in Martina Fuchs – Teréz Oborni – Gábor Újváry (Hgg.), *Kaiser Ferdinand I. Ein mitteleuropäischer Herrscher*. (Münster, 2005), 207–233. Idem, 'Information, Ideology', 75–103. Cf. Murphey, 'Süleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary', 214–216 and Şahin, *Empire and Power,* 82.

a scholar of Ottoman history, he will obviously adhere to the facts and evaluate the main events, trends, internal and external conditions of the 1520s, a decisive period in his judgment, while seeking to draw conclusions from the findings. For a start, it is to be noted that in the family politics of the Habsburgs, the anti-Turkish struggle was still considered a secondary issue, a matter of less importance than the religious struggle against the Protestants and the power struggle with France. Any action taken by the eastern branch – i.e. King Ferdinand I – had to accommodate these two factors.[125] This precluded any initiative on the Ottoman front. For this reason it was the events of 1526 and of 1529 particularly that made Charles V realise he had to pay more attention to the eastern part of their empire. Neither before nor after Mohács was the Hungarian state in a position to launch an offensive against the Ottomans.[126] Since the 1520s was replete with Ottoman–Hungarian and Ottoman–Habsburg frontal encounters, these must have been initiated by Süleyman because he alone was capable of such undertakings. But what were the goals of the Ottoman ruler?

First of all, it follows from the discussion in the first part of the study that the empire could not afford peace on all its frontiers in the long term – or even in the medium term because this would have upset the interior balance. Upon his accession, Süleyman was facing dangerous enemies on four different fronts; offensive wars could be fought in four directions.

On the *Iranian* front, a source of concern was the failure – despite his father's victory at the battle of Chaldiran (1514) – to destroy Shah Ismail I and his state. It was to be

[125] Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London), 1980, 34–36.

[126] Yet such irrealistic plans were also forged on the eve of Mohács. For the last attempt in 1522–23, see István Zombori, 'The Jagiello–Habsburg Attempt at War against the Ottomans in 1523. Based on Chancellor K. Szydłowiecki's Diary', in Zombori (ed.), *Fight against the Turk*, 147–153.

expected that Ismail, having consolidated his power, would seize the initiative once again, drawing support from the *kızılbaş* groups. The concerns strengthened when, in late 1520 and early 1521, reports of rebellions were received from the eastern half of the empire. The second such report arrived amid preparations for the campaign in Hungary, and it was beyond doubt that the rebels had received support from Shah Ismail.[127]

Ever since his humiliation at Chaldiran, the Safavid ruler had faced Selim's threats in the absence of a significant military force. His only option had been to counter his weakness by employing clever tactics, by causing disturbances and by strengthening political relations.[128] From 1516, Ismail had made great efforts to obtain firearms and to keep showing them off on the Ottoman border.

In all likelihood this lessened the enthusiasm of the Ottoman soldiers for a new Persian campaign. Clear evidence of this came in the spring of 1518 when the forces were returning from Egypt. Their lord, Selim, expressed a desire to attack the shah, but coming from the fields of Marc Dabik, where two years earlier the Mamluk sultan had been defeated, they (mostly janissaries)

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127 Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, 'Études Turco–Safavides, III. Notes et documents sur la révolte de Şâh Velî b. Şeyh Celâl', *Archivum Ottomanicum* 7 (1982) 5–69. Idem, 'Şah İsmail ve Canberdi Gazali İsyanı', *Erdem* 5:13 (1989) 227–237.

128 For the following, see also Sohrweide, Der Sieg der Safaviden, 95–223. Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*. (Ankara, 1969). Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman–Safavid Conflict (906–962/1500–1555)*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 91.) (Berlin, 1983). Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, les Safavides et leurs voisins. Contribution à l'histoire des relations internationales dans l'Orient islamique de 1514 à 1524*. (Istanbul, 1987). Idem, 'XVI. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Osmanlılar ve Safevîler', in *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan*. (İstanbul, 1991), 205–215. Idem, 'Études Turco–Safavides, I. Notes sur le blocus du commerce iranien par Selîm Ier', *Turcica* 6 (1975) 68–88. Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Le règne de Selīm Ier: tournant dans la vie politique et religieuse de l'Empire ottoman', *Turcica* 6 (1975) 34–48. Irène Melikoff, 'Le problème kızılbaş', *Turcica* 6 (1975) 49–67. Hans-Joachim Kissling, 'Šâh Ismâ'îl Ier, la nouvelle route des Indes et les Ottomans', *Turcica* 6 (1975) 89–102. Feridun Emecen, *Zamanın İskenderi, Şarkın Fatihi Yavuz Sultan Selim*. (İstanbul, 2010).

resisted his call, and so Selim was forced to set a course for Istanbul rather than for Iran. In part because of the exhaustive march of 1514 and in part because of the bitter memories of the battle of Chaldiran, the janissaries, who six years earlier had helped bring Selim to the throne, now prevented the realisation of his dream – a final showdown with the shah.

For his part, Ismail sought out relations with the adversaries of the Ottoman Empire: with the Knights of Rhodes (he would have liked to acquire from them Murad, the son of Prince Cem, the brother of Bayezid II who had died in European exile), with the Portuguese (he had backed a trade agreement with them), and with the European powers (he sought to persuade them to launch a concerted attack). He also established good relations with countries in the Caucasus (thus improving his supply lines), and he did not shrink back from interfering behind the lines in Selim's own territory. Having guessed that the sultan's military preparations were directed against him, in the second half of 1519, he organised an uprising among his followers in Anatolia, particularly in the province of Rum. On the date prescribed by Ismail (February 5, 1520), Şah Veli bin Şeyh Celal unfurled the flag of the uprising. In the end, however, Ismail abandoned the rebels, who after several initial victories succumbed to the onslaught of government troops. In late 1520 and early 1521, despite a prior pledge of support, Ismail similarly let down the rebel Caberdi Gazali in Syria. In withdrawing his support, Ismail acted primarily to deny Selim a pretext for attack. A secondary objective was to rescue the much-anticipated peace agreement.

After 1514 Selim rejected all attempts by Ismail to secure a rapprochement. He even ordered the detention and subsequent execution of the members of three delegations sent by Ismail. Between 1518 and 1520, he provoked Ismail with a series of outrageous actions to provide Ottoman public opinion with a pretext for attack. Today we know that Canberdi initially

contacted Ismail with the consent of the sultan and even based on his instructions; the planned "sham rebellion" was designed to drag the shah into yet another war. After Selim's death, however, the experiment failed; Canberdi realised the time had come for him to take an independent position.

Over time Selim's total war against Iran gave rise to increasing resentment within the empire. The commercial blockade introduced by him had caused enormous losses not only for Iran but also for the Ottoman Empire's subjects and treasury. A growing number of people had fallen victim to the abuse that surrounded the controls and confiscations. They did not like how the merchants of Tabriz, Aleppo and Egypt had been forced to come to Constantinople. The mood of the army and its readiness for battle were matters of concern. The long campaigns fought in remote places, the difficult terrain, the 'dog-fight' *(köpek savaşı)* methods employed by the Persians (i.e. the scorched earth tactics[129] and the resultant food shortages), the depletion of the military operating areas, the bravery of the *kızılbaş* forces, and the reluctance of the soldiers to fight against fellow believers – all these factors meant that in the east the authorities could rely less and less on the soldiers who, in the areas plagued by clashes with *kızılbaş* rebels, tended to switch allegiance or run off without explanation. In his report of March 10, 1519, Bartolomeo Contarini, the Venetian envoy, wrote for good reason that the Ottoman soldiers had grown weary of the struggle against the shah and would rather have resumed the battle against the Hungarians who were more familiar to them.[130]

Unsurprisingly, therefore, one of Sultan Süleyman's first measures was to lift the commercial blockade of Iran (true, the export of certain metals was still subject to permits). He then

[129] Rhoads Murphey, 'Süleyman's Eastern Policy', in Halil İnalcık – Cemal Kafadar (eds.), *Süleymân the Second and His Time*. (İstanbul, 1993), 233.

[130] Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, les Safavides et leurs voisins*, 172.

released the merchants from Iran and the Arab countries who had been forcibly resettled in the empire and returned assets to merchants who had been deprived of their properties. The political change required the Ottoman leadership to settle their relationship with Ismail at least to a minimum extent. First and foremost, the leaders needed to ensure that the shah would remain passive when the campaigns against Hungary were launched. This was achieved in part by ordering the Anatolian troops to deploy to Central Anatolia under Ferhad Pasha's command. In addition, at Grand Vizier Piri Pasha's behest (who had been a principal spokesman for reconciliation even under Selim) and without informing the *kızılbaş* leadership, the Ottomans sent envoys to Tabriz with the task of making an ambiguous compromise offer in order to delay any attack by the shah's forces. As it turned out, the fear of a Safavid attack was unwarranted; the shah's ministers had long awaited such an offer and were delighted to confirm the Safavid court's willingness to compromise. In late 1521, Bıyıklı Mehmed Pasha, governor-general of Diyarbekir and Selim's one-time confidant, died. With the passing of this implacable enemy of the *kızılbaş*, one of the biggest obstacles to reconciliation was no more. After diplomatic preparations, the details of which remain unknown, in September 1523 the envoy of Shah Ismail, a man named Taceddin Hasan, arrived in Istanbul bearing generous gifts. Ismail wished to express his condolences on Selim's death and congratulate Süleyman on his victories at Belgrade and at Rhodes. At the negotiations the Ottoman leaders allegedly demanded that the shah renounces Baghdad and several Iranian territories. It seems nothing came of this, but when the envoy left the Ottoman capital the two empires were once again on speaking terms after a decade of hostility. On May 23, 1524, Shah Ismail passed away and his country, which he had protected with great skill against its powerful enemies, fell into complete anarchy following a power struggle between the various

kızılbaş tribes. Until 1528, Süleyman faced no problems with his (still weak) Iranian neighbour. Accordingly, in the 1520s, with the full support of the empire's various actors, he could "steer the reins of his victorious imperial campaign against the … accursed Hungarians"[131] while putting a solution to the "eastern question" on hold.

The other front in the east was in the *Red Sea* and the *Indian Ocean* with the Portuguese on the other side, who had arrived there after going round the Cape of Good Hope at the turn of the century. Having secured a foothold on the western shores of India, the Portuguese made incursions into the Red Sea, threatening Mecca and – more importantly – the Muslim trading monopoly in the Indian Ocean.[132] The inherent danger was clear, especially in view of their contacts with Shah Ismail of Iran; the Portuguese even planned to conclude an anti-Ottoman and anti-Mamluk alliance.[133] The Mamluks, the lords of the holy cities, the overseers and main beneficiaries of the Muslim pilgrimages and trade between Arabia and India, were less and less able to withstand the Portuguese pressure and from 1507 they had to resort to Ottoman material aid. In this way the latter became involved in the anti-Portuguese struggle, and after the defeat of the Mamluks (1517) they took charge of protecting the holy shrines of Islam and the Muslim, mainly Egyptian,

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[131] Feridun Ahmed Bey, *Münşeatü's-selatin*. Vol. I. (İstanbul, 1274/1858[2]), 547. Cf. József Thúry, *Török történetírók* [Turkish chroniclers]. (Török–Magyarkori Történelmi Emlékek. Második Osztály: Írók.) Vol. I. (Budapest, 1893), 379.

[132] Charles R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825*. (London, 1969), 1–47. Salih Özbaran, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Hindistan Yolu. Onaltıncı Yüzyılda Ticâret Yolları Üzerinde Türk–Portekiz Rekâbet ve İlişkileri', *Tarih Dergisi* 31 (1977[1978]) 71–81. Most of Özbaran's studies cited here can be found in Idem, *Yemen'den Basra'ya: Sınırdaki Osmanlı*. (İstanbul, 2004). Cf. recently Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. For more on this book, see Soucek, 'About the Ottoman Age of Exploration', particularly 338–342, and my remarks in the introduction to the present volume.

[133] Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery*. (Albany, 1994), 45.

trade which was of decisive importance for them. Although some have argued that the Ottomans conquered the Mamluk Empire with the intention of using its territory as a launching pad for their struggle for the domination of the Indian Ocean,[134] it seems they did not feel strong enough for a maritime encounter with the Portuguese. In the summer of 1525 Selman Reis, the commander of the Ottoman fleet at Suez proposed an offensive (claiming that the Portuguese could be defeated) in his report to Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, but his suggestion was turned down.[135] The central government, so far as it was able to, reinforced the Red Sea navy, set up a command at Suez, but it did not venture out into the high seas, and was content with defending the "inland sea" and its southern entrance near Yemen (not always successfully). The leaders of the empire similarly backed out of a clash with the Portuguese in the early 1530s when the Red Sea navy was almost completely ready for an offensive on the Indian Ocean.[136] The reluctance of the Istanbul government can probably be ascribed to two major factors: the extraordinary costs (e.g. the perennial problem of obtaining and delivering the wood necessary for ship-building) and the realisation that the Ottoman (Mediterranean) naval technology lagged behind that of the Portuguese, which rendered the outcome of a naval encounter so uncertain.[137] Until the Ottomans acquired new

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134 Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, 111–121, esp. 120. The same is suggested by Casale, *The Ottoman Age*, 25–29.

135 Michel Lesure, 'Un document ottoman de 1525 sur l'Inde portugaise et les pays de la Mer Rouge', *Mare Luso-Indicum* 3 (1976) 137–160. Cf. Salih Özbaran, 'A Turkish Report on the Red Sea and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean (1525)', *Arabian Studies* 4 (1978) 81–88.

136 Salih Özbaran, 'The Ottomans in Confrontation with the Portuguese in the Red Sea after the Conquest of Egypt in 1517', in *Studies on Turkish–Arab Relations. Annual 1986.* (İstanbul, 1986), 213.

137 For the differences in technology and management, see Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750.* (Cambridge, 1985), 121–159. Colin H. Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980) 222–227. Salih Özbaran, 'Ottoman

outlets to the Indian Ocean through their occupation of Iraq (1533–35) and Basra (1546), they did not change their basically defensive maritime policy.[138]

The third front was in the *Mediterranean*, stretching in a north-south direction from the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea to Egypt, with a few extensions in North Africa. The Ottomans had learnt from the example of Byzantium that an empire with its centre in Constantinople and with various parts separated by sea, could not cope without an effective navy. This was particularly true given the long-distance trade conducted through its territories. The demands of mainland conquests (the transportation of troops and provisions), the control of the movements of enemy ships and the defence of an extensive coastline all required a fleet. Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) had established the largest fleet of the Mediterranean by the turn of the century, entrusting its command to pirates, who were regarded as the best seamen of the age. Pirate competence coupled with the economic might of the Ottomans yielded an enormous harvest in 1499: in the battle of Lepanto the imperial fleet defeated the earlier invincible Venetian fleet (contributing to the transformation of the Republic's policies).[139]

Naval Policy in the South', in Kunt – Woodhead (eds.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, 64. İdris Bostan, *Kürekli ve Yelkenli Osmanlı Gemileri*. (İstanbul, 2005), 103 ff.

[138] On events of the later period, see Muhammad Yakub Mughul, *Kanunî Devri*. (İstanbul, 1987), 137–206. Salih Özbaran, 'The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Golf 1534–1581', *Journal of Asian History* 6 (1972) 56–74. Idem, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Hindistan Yolu', 92–146. Idem, 'Ottoman Naval Policy', 55–70. Halil İnalcık, 'The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300–1600', in Halil İnalcık – Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*. (Cambridge, 1994), 325–340. Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti*. (İstanbul, 1974), 1–42. Soucek, 'About the Ottoman Age of Exploration', 325–342.

[139] Andrew C. Hess, 'The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborn Empire in the Age of the Oceanic Discoveries, 1453–1525', *The American Historical Review* 75 (1970) 1904–1906.

After 1500 the Ottomans had no one to fear. They ruled the Levant and the Black Sea, with the latter gradually becoming an inland sea.[140] For the time being, however, they used their naval force mainly to ensure the trading routes and to defend themselves against the Hospitallers on Rhodes and against local pirates privateering in coastal waters.[141] In the 1510s Sultan Selim continued his father's endeavours by reinforcing the fleet; he relied on it heavily in his campaigns in the Near East during which he united the western Islamic lands, elevating his dynasty to the rank of supreme power in Islam. The appearance of the Portuguese, as mentioned earlier, also spurred the Ottomans to deploy their navy in the Near Eastern and Red Sea zone.

After the conquest of Egypt (1517), it became gradually unavoidable for the Porte to deal with the west of the Mediterranean, where a new conflict was taking shape around 1510. While the Ottomans were engaged in the Near East, the rising Spanish monarchy shifted the Christian–Muslim front to North Africa after their Iberian victories. Within the Spanish leadership there were two conflincting conceptions. Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros (supported by Queen Isabella) envisioned a North African, Spanish–Mauritanian empire, while King Ferdinand judged it sufficient to construct a defensive system restricted to the shores and directed against the Saracens, because his priority was domination of the Western Mediterranean and Southern Italy.[142] Ferdinand's conception gained the upper hand, and from 1505 the so-called *presidio* system, a defensive line, was gradually erected by seizing or building seaside fortifications

[140] For a recent, different view on the status of the Black Sea, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, 'Inner Lake or Frontier? The Ottoman Black Sea in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Faruk Bilici – Ionel Candea – Anca Popescu (eds.), *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIVe–XXIe siècles). Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*. (Braïla, 2007), 125–139.

[141] Brumett, *Ottoman Seapower*, 107.

[142] John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1496–1716*. (London, 1963), 53–54.

and garrisons in the Maghrib. In response to the Spanish expansion, the North African population composed of Moorish refugees, Christian slaves and local elements established closer links and turned to organised piracy, which had previously been pursued only as a secondary occupation. In the 1510s a local war evolved from clashes between the Spaniards and the pirate communities of Jerba, Algiers and Tunis, etc. From 1515 Oruc and Hayreddin, the two Barbarossa brothers, took over the command of the fighting and occupied Algiers the next year.

By the end of the 1510s the local war had almost escalated into a global Christian–Muslim conflict. Hayreddin, who succeeded his brother killed in 1518, realised that he was not powerful enough to confront either the Spaniards or the increasingly jealous Hafsid dynasty of Tunis and his other local ennemies, so he turned to Istanbul for help, where their envoys had been received favourably a few years earlier.[143] Until recently it was thought that in response to Hayreddin's request for assistance, Sultan Selim had appointed him governor of Algiers and had then reinforced his position by sending artillery and two thousand janissaries (who were granted the same privileges as their fellows in Istanbul) and by giving general authorisation for volunteers to go to the Maghrib, whereupon the pirate chief had formally accepted Ottoman suzerainty by having Selim's name read in the Friday sermons and minting coins in his name.[144] However, as a recent study has pointed out, Sultan Selim was intitially reluctant to give a helping hand because he was preoccupied with preparations for a campaign against Rhodes. So probably it was not until the spring of 1521 that an emissary of Sultan Süleyman arrived in the Maghrib, bringing

143 Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier.* (Chicago, London, 1978), 61–62.

144 Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 65. Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*. (Cambridge, 1987), 150.

an appointment diploma and a standard for Hayreddin. Only then was the vassalage established through the mentioning of Süleyman's name in a Friday sermon and its placement on the coinage.[145] These developments cleared the way for a direct Spanish–Ottoman confrontation in the western basin of the Mediterranean.

However, the great war was tarrying, for neither Charles V, elected emperor in 1519, nor Sultan Süleyman resumed the policy of confrontation in North Africa, both concentrating instead on the European theatre.[146] We do not know Süleyman's concrete opinion about the Mediterranean, but it would seem he judged that the immediate interests of the empire were not jeopardised by the Spaniards. This belief was probably corroborated by Hayreddin Barbarossa's successes, who, after some transitory difficulties, scored minor and major victories over the Spaniards in the latter half of the 1520s.[147] Süleyman had nothing to fear of the Venetians; they had been weakened not only by Ottoman military might and the Italian wars of the western powers (which had even made them consider soliciting

[145] Nicolas Vatin, 'Note sur l'entrée d'Alger sous la souveraineté ottoman (1519–1521)', *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013) 131–166, esp. 154–156. For other nuanced accounts of Hayreddin's early career based on an Ottoman narrative source (also used extensively by Hess) entitled *Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa*, see Rhoads Murphey, 'Seyyid Muradî's Prose Biography on Hızır Ibn Yakub, Alias Hayreddin Barbarossa. Ottoman Folk Narrative as an Under-Exploited Source for Historical Reconstruction', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54:4 (2001) 519–532 and Nicolas Vatin, '"Comment êtes-vous apparus, toi et ton frère?": note sur les origins des frères Barberousse', *Studia Islamica* n. s. 1 (2011) 103–131. For the editions of the work, see Vatin, '"Comment êtes-vous apparus"', 103: note 2.

[146] Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier,* 66–67. Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'The Centre and the Frontier: Ottoman Cooperation with the North African Corsairs in the Sixteenth Century', *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010) 132. Idem, 'Osmanlı–Habsburg Rekâbeti Çerçevesinde Osmanlılar'ın XVI. Yüzyıl'daki Akdeniz Siyaseti', in Haydar Çoruh – M. Yaşar Ertaş – M. Ziya Köse (eds.), *Osmanlı Dönemi Akdeniz Dünyası.* (İstanbul, 2011), 22–44.

[147] Zoltán Korpás, 'Spanyol védelmi rendszer Észak-Afrikában V. Károly uralkodása alatt [The Spanish defence system in North Africa during Charles V's reign]', *Africana Hungarica* 1:1 (1998) 66–67.

Ottoman assistance), but also by concerns about commercial competition from Ottoman (both Muslim and non-Muslim), Ragusan and Portuguese merchants. Apparently, the Porte did not seek a global Mediterranean clash until Charles V radically changed his maritime policy under Spanish pressure. Istanbul only then decided upon opening a new front and getting more actively involved in Mediterranean warfare. This was after Andrea Doria and the Genovese fleet had switched allegiance to Charles (1528) and their attack in Greece in 1532 had made it clear that despite a spectacular development the Ottoman naval force and defence was still highly vulnerable.[148]

Along the fourth front, in *Central Europe*, where the Ottomans were at Hungary's southern borders, there were several new developments, and these served as incentives for the Istanbul government. Western politics, which in earlier periods had been relatively unified by the idea of crusades and the underlying papal authority, became increasingly diversified and divided from the end of the fifteenth century. In 1494 the Italian wars began, and for half a century after Charles V's accession to the throne (1519), the western world turned its attention to the Valois–Habsburg rivalry.[149] Added to this were the decline of papal authority and the rise of Protestantism, which caused further divisions in European societies.[150] Being attentive to

[148] On the campaign, see Zoltán Korpás, *V. Károly és Magyarország (1526–1538)* [Charles V and Hungary 1526–1538]. (Budapest, 2008), 152–153, 159. Özlem Kumrular, 'Koron: Uzak Topraklarda İmkânsız Misyon', in Eadem, *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Osmanlı–Habsburg Düellosu*. (İstanbul, 2011), 185–190. Gürkan, 'The Centre and the Frontier', 132–133.

[149] Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I. Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit. Band II. Reichsreform und Kaiserpolitik 1493–1500. Entmachtung des Königs im Reich und in Europa*. (Wien, 1975), 9–58. Richard Mackenney, *Macmillan History of Europe. Sixteenth Century Europe. Expansion and Conflict*. (Houndmills, London, 1993), 219–242.

[150] Mackenney, *Sixteenth Century Europe*, 129–172, 268–280.

such European events,[151] the sultan's court must have have felt that there had never been a more favourable opportunity for the long-anticipated breakthrough in Europe. This impression was probably enhanced by successive attempts on the part of the European powers to seek the sultan's friendship; they evidently perceived him not only as a hated religious foe but also as a potential ally in the struggle for power in Europe.[152]

In addition to the external factors, there were several domestic political considerations supporting a European offensive. The first and foremost reason was economic. The bulk of the Ottoman state's resources and revenues came from the Balkans, and although with the conquest of the Near East the importance of the region had somewhat declined, it remained the primary source.[153] If the Ottomans had some knowledge of the Hungarian (Central European) lands and of their developed state in relation to the Balkans (and they usually carried out thorough reconnaissance before a conquest), they could easily conclude that their acquisition would be a clear gain for the empire (in terms of revenues, *timar*-estates to be distributed, etc.).

Expansion northward and westward was especially urged for by the troops stationed in Rumelia. There appears to have been a "Rumelian lobby" which applied methods similar to

[151] Christine Isom-Verhaaren, 'An Ottoman Report about Martin Luther and the Emperor: New Evidence of the Ottoman Interest in the Protestant Challenge to the Power of Charles V', *Turcica* 28 (1996) 299–318 (an intelligence report around 1530). On Ottoman intelligence in general in this period, see Ágoston, 'Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy', 75–92. Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'The Efficacy of Ottoman Counter-Intelligence in the 16th Century', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 65:1 (2012) 1–38.

[152] For relevant information, see Fodor – Dávid, 'Hungarian–Ottoman Peace Negotiations in 1512–1514', 13–14. A major ruler who was one of the first to seek an alliance with the Ottoman Empire was Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor.

[153] See the amounts in the central budget of 1523–25: Halil Sahillioğlu, '1524–1525 Osmanlı Bütçesi', *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 41 (1985) 424. In 1527–28 Egypt and Syria provided roughly a third of all revenues.

those of the Ottoman military elite in Bosnia and Hungary before the so-called "Long War" (1593–1606).[154] The similarity is not accidental. In both cases decades had passed since a large imperial offensive against neighbouring countries.[155] Owing to incessant incursions, clashes and pillaging, the border areas had been devastated. The troops, hungering after prebends and booty and with their numbers boosted by volunteers, were impatient to seize new lands from where raids could be conducted to more remote and untouched areas.[156] While in 1591–93 the war-party was led by the governor of Bosnia Hasan Pasha, around 1520 Bali *bey* seems to have been the spokesman of the "Rumelian lobby".[157] As a member of the Yahyapaşaoğlu family, he had useful connections to the upper circles and a good knowledge of the enemy's position. Describing Hungary as easy prey in his report, he encouraged the sultan's court to launch an offensive as soon as possible.[158]

The government could not ignore such voices, even if it might have wanted to turn a deaf ear. As I noted above, by the time of the change of rulers, serious discontent had accumulated not only among the Rumelian soldiers but also in the entire Ottoman society about Selim's autocratic methods and his insistence on the eastern wars. In an effort to consolidate his power, Süleyman – as mentioned earlier – had no choice but

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154 Fodor, 'Prelude to the Long War', 297–301.

155 In 1456 and 1566, respectively.

156 For the importance of the pressure by volunteers, see Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: The Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606.* (Wien, 1988), 44.

157 For his life, see Dušanka Bojanić, 'Požarevac u XVI veku i Bali-beg Jahjapašić', *Istorijski Časopis* 32 (1985 [1986]) 49–77, esp. 50–53, 55–65.

158 M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Kanunî Sultan Süleyman*. (İstanbul, 1967), 7. Cf. Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy', 292, 334–336. According to Hoca Sadeddin, the military commanders of the Rumelian army had already proposed an invasion of Hungary immediately after the death of King Matthias, making use of the turbulence prevailing in the country. See Hoca Sadeddin, *Tacü't-tevarih*. Vol. II. (İstanbul, 1280/1863), 69–70. Thúry, *Török történetírók*, Vol. I, 174.

to break with his father's heritage in both domestic and foreign policies. His first measures to remedy the grievances of various social groups were meant to prove that with his rise to power the empire had returned to the path of justice and lawfulness.[159] When revising foreign policy and examining the status of the four major fronts, he could not ignore the mood of the army and that of society as a whole. The weighing of power relations and the resources available clearly showed the decisive superiority of the Ottomans in Central Europe. The anticipated victories would not only enhance the growth of the empire but also further strengthen his domestic position. The sultan was persuaded that the enormous Ottoman war machinery should be deployed in the western theatre of war with a view to demonstrating to his subjects that a new foreign policy era had began in Ottoman history.[160]

THE CONQUEST OF HUNGARY AND THE ENSUING OTTOMAN–HABSBURG RIVALRY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In the autumn of 1520 the decision was taken, and in the very next year the Ottoman forces led by Sultan Süleyman set out against Hungary. Though the original plan was to occupy the capital city of Buda, the ruler's inexperience and clumsiness in military commandership "only" resulted in the seizure of the key points of the southern Hungarian border defence, the fortresses of Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade and Szabács/

159 Woodhead, 'Perspectives', 164–166.

160 Kaya Şahin, relying on the preamble of the Egyptian *kanunname*, thinks this "western turn" and the birth of a new "political theology" with claims to messianic kingship and universal monarchy took place in 1524 (the year of the compilation of the mentioned law-code) and its translation into practice began only in 1526; see Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 56–63, 188–190.

Böğürdelen.[161] Still, it seems likely that even at the time of this firs campaign the objective of the sultan's army was not merely to occupy Hungary. Rather it appears this was the overture to a more sweeping strategy. As Marco Minio, the Venetian envoy who after the Ottoman victory had hurried to Istanbul to express the Republic's good wishes, reported from Istanbul that the pashas had inquired about European policies, Rome and the roads, and also told him overtly that the sultan had committed himself to a European offensive; the first objective of the war was Hungary whence they would be able to attack other countries more easily.[162] As Venice, in line with expectations, had remained neutral at the time of the Hungarian campaign, the padishah consented, on December 11, 1521, to the reaffirmation of the earlier treaty between the two parties. During the negotiations, the pashas advised the Venetian envoy in an amicable manner that the Signoria should avoid violating the peace between the two states during the upcoming wars in Hungary. It should not offer any form of assistance to Hungary, as it might well suffer an attack on its long and indefensible coastline. The Venetian leaders heeded this admonition; in the 1520s they watched idly as Hungary was attacked and defeated. Indeed, immediately before and after the battle of Mohács, they went even further, encouraging Ottoman expansion in Central Europe.

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161 Káldy-Nagy, 'Suleimans Angriff', 165–169. Ferenc Szakály, 'Nándorfehérvár, 1521: The Beginning of the End of the Medieval Hungarian Kingdom', in Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Hungarian-Ottoman Military*, 47–76. On the goals, see Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy', 290–291.

162 Albèri, *Le relazioni*, Vol. III/III, 75–76. The same was stated by Shah Ismail with reference to the sultan's letters of 1523 to him: Tardy, *Beyond the Ottoman Empire*, 131. Before the start of the 1526 Mohács campaign, Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha uttered similar words to the Venetian ambassador, making him feel that the eventual aim of the empire was to conquer the "Roman Empire" and establish the rule of Islam. Cornell H. Fleischer, 'Shadows of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s Istanbul', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13:1–2 (2007) 55.

The events of the next twelve years proved that the Venetian envoy was not talking out of his hat. True, the consolidation of the new provinces in the Near East and of the Levant led to a four-year interruption in the implementation of the plan.[163] After 1525, however, nothing prevented the sultan from resuming the undertaking.

It was in this and the previous year that he began preparations for a further European campaign. The leadership had previously considered the possibility of an attack on Poland, but this idea was now rejected. Indeed, in the autumn of 1525, a three-year truce was signed with King Sigismund's envoy.[164] Also in 1525, the Porte abandoned its attempts to integrate Wallachia into the empire, recognising the rule of the tenacious Voivode Radul in return for his submission and an increased annual tribute. After such diplomatic preparations there was no real doubt that Hungary would be the target of the upcoming attack; this was the logical continuation of the line taken in 1521. Amid the preparations the envoy of Francis I arrived in Istanbul. The King of France, who had fallen captive to Charles V following his defeat at the battle of Pavia in February 1525, informed the sultan of his misfortune, requesting him to attack Hungary as a means of weakening the Habsburgs. The envoy Joannes Frangepan allegedly warned Ibrahim and the Ottoman authorities that unless prompt

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[163] On the capture of Rhodes, see Setton, *The Papacy*, Vol. III, 198–216. Nicolas Vatin, *L'Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jerusalem, l'Empire ottoman et la Méditerranée orientale entre les deux sièges de Rhodes 1480–1522.* (Collection turcica, 7.) (Louvain, Paris, 1994), 339–374. On the suppression of the revolt and the settling of administrative matters in Egypt: Seyyid Muhammed es-Seyyid Mahmud, *XVI. Asırda Mısır Eyâleti*. (İstanbul, 1990), 72–90. Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule 1517–1598*. (New York, London, 1992), 14–17. Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 53–59.

[164] Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of* ʻAhdnames *and Other Documents*. (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Halil İnalcik. Vol. 18.) (Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2000), 116, 222–226.

action was taken against Emperor Charles, he would soon become ruler of the world.[165] For Süleyman, this message, coming from one of the most powerful rulers of the Christian world, was evidence of the fatal divisions afflicting Europe. It also reassured him that there was no danger of the emergence of a hostile military alliance in Hungary. Süleyman felt that his ideas had been vindicated, but – as the course of events show – none of this directly influenced his decision about the campaign.

When Hungary, left completely alone, was crushed easily in the battle of Mohács on August 29, 1526,[166] the road opened towards the west. Yet after 1526 a degree of confusion can be discerned at the Porte. Certain sources indicate that the sultan and Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha had not expected Hungary to collapse so quickly; they were not prepared to occupy the country right away. In the meantime, local revolts broke out in Anatolia that had to be put down. A similarly paralysing effect stemmed from the fact that the food reserves of the empire had been temporarily exhausted as a result of the serial campaigns and the destruction wrought by the rebels.

Meanwhile, events in both Hungary and the West accelerated. In Hungary, after the death of Louis II at Mohács, there were two rival claimants to the throne: John Szapolyai, Voivode of Transylvania, whose coronation actually took

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[165] On the Ottoman–French attempts at "making friends", see Michael Hochendlinger, 'Die französisch–osmanische 'Freundschaft' 1525–1792. Element antihabsburgischer Politik, Gleichgewichtsinstrument, Prestigeunternehmung – Aufriß eines Problems', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 102:1–2 (1994) 108–164, esp. 115–119, 146–149. Cf. recently Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century*. (London, New York, 2011), 23–40.

[166] János B. Szabó – Ferenc Tóth, *Mohács (1526). Soliman le Magnifique prend pied en Europe Central*. (Paris, 2009). Feridun M. Emecen, 'Mohaç 1526: Osmanlılara Orta Avrupa'nın Kapılarını Açan Savaş', in Idem, *Osmanlı Klasik Çağında Savaş*. (İstanbul, 2010), 159–216.

place on November 10, 1526, and Ferdinand of Habsburg, Archduke of Austria. The latter backed up his claim with the force of arms, and it seemed he might well accomplish his goal. In Italy, the anti-Habsburg League of Cognac (an alliance between the Pope, Venice, Milan and France) were roundly defeated by imperial troops, and Rome fell into the hands of Charles V (1527). These developments quickly led the Porte and Venice to form a united front. The latter was dismayed by the double advance of the Habsburg brothers. Through its envoys in Istanbul and Lodovico Gritti,[167] who was living in the city, from the spring of 1527 Venice kept urging the sultan's court to take action in Hungary. It also reminded the ruler and his advisors of Charles' ambitions to rule the world and of the danger such ambitions posed to both Venice and the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, the Signoria did not wish to see a permanent Ottoman presence in Hungary. For this reason, it sought a significant role for John Szapolyai. Venice's hope was that Szapolyai might remain on the Hungarian throne as an Ottoman vassal. It advised the beleaguered king to seek assistance from the sultan. It then instructed its *bailo* in Istanbul (and also Gritti, it seems) to do his (their) utmost to persuade the sultan to reach out to Szapolyai and support his status as king.

By this time, however, the Porte, having been influenced by the dramatic events, was thinking of much grander plans. Süleyman and Ibrahim were both of the view that the time had come for the dynasty to attempt to bring to fruition its claim to "world rule", which until then had been expressed

[167] For more on the role of this interesting figure, see Ferenc Szakály, *Lodovico Gritti in Hungary 1529–1534. A Historical Insight into the Beginnings of Turco-Habsburgian Rivalry*. (Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 197.) (Budapest, 1995). Gizella Nemeth Papo – Adriano Papo, *Ludovico Gritti: Un principe-mercante del Rinascimento tra Venezia, i turchi e la corona d'Ungheria*. Mariano del Friuli, 2002.

only in principle. Indeed, there was no sense in delaying any longer. Emperor Charles V, a figure largely ignored by the Ottoman Empire prior to Mohács, had come close to realising his hegemonic plans through his recent victories. Meanwhile Ferdinand's victories in Hungary called into question the very meaning of Ottoman efforts. In view of these factors and the military and political balance of power, the sultan appears to have decided in the autumn of 1527 to abandon the gradualist approach and lead his armies against Vienna. The apparent aim was to deliver a decisive blow against Habsburg power in Central Europe. With the defeat of Ferdinand I, Hungary could have been integrated into the Ottoman Empire. Before it could launch this campaign, however, the Ottoman leadership needed to establish a whole series of financial, organisational and diplomatic conditions. It was not until the beginning of 1529 that the task could be completed.

The priority for the sultan's court was to form an unbreakable bond with John Szapolyai, who was needed for three reasons: to ensure that Hungary would remain divided until the arrival of the sultan's army; to provide a friendly environment in Hungary for Ottoman forces as they advanced towards their target; and to ensure that Hungary would provide food supplies to the Ottoman soldiers. The last point was particularly important given that the campaign was being fought at greater distance from Istanbul than had been the case in any previous undertaking. This is why Szapolyai's response was so anxiously awaited in Istanbul. It also explains the rather unfriendly words spoken by the pashas on the belated arrival (in late 1527) of Szapolyai's envoy, Hyeronimus Łaski. The Porte initially offered the status of tribute-paying vassal to the Hungarian king, but when this was firmly rejected by the envoy the sultan agreed to renounce for a time the tribute or gift symbolising political dependence. The alliance was finally signed in February 1528; it

seems the agreement was of equal importance to both the Porte and Szapolyai.[168]

In these months, the sultan's court claimed repeatedly that the aim of the attack would be to assist Hungary and achieve Szapolyai's reinstatement. It seems that this was believed not only by Szapolyai but also by Venetian diplomacy and the Polish royal court.[169] In a separate message, Ibrahim informed the latter of the intentions of the sultan's court in this regard. Concluding their preparatory action, the sultan and the grand vizier undertook two further diplomatic maneouvres. The first amounted to a gesture to Francis I: in September 1528, in an imperial letter issued to the French consul in Alexandria they confirmed the privileges of French and Catalan merchants (originally obtained from the Mamluks in 1513) in the Mediterranean.[170] The second was a three-year truce signed in October of the same year with King Sigismund, which served to rule out the possibility of Polish assistance to the Habsburgs.[171] This act completed the diplomatic isolation of Ferdinand I. The rest would depend on weaponry.

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[168] See the documents and studies published in the volume Barta (ed.), *Két tárgyalás Sztambulban*, particularly Fodor, 'A Bécsbe vezető út', *ibid.*, 63–96. – In 1529, the sultan, issuing a new letter of covenant, sought to compel Szapolyai to accept the status of tribute-paying vassal, but the Hungarian king refused to pay the tribute during his reign. For more details, including various issues surrounding the Ottoman-Hungarian letter of agreement, see Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vetragsurkunden,* 27–51. Idem, 'Hungary and the Ottoman Empire', 70–83.

[169] Indicatively, when reporting in May 1529 on the sultan's departure for battle, Pietro Zen, *bailo* in Istanbul, wrote that the Turks had set out for Hungary to restore Szapolyai's kingship.

[170] Ernest Charrière, *Négotiations de la France dans le Levant…* Tome I. (Paris, 1848), 121–129. Gilles Veinstein, 'Les capitulations franco-ottomanes de 1536. Sont-elles encore controversables?', in Vera Costantini – Markus Koller (eds.), *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi.* (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Halil İnalcık. Vol. 39.) (Leiden, Boston, 2008), 81–84.

[171] Fodor, 'A Bécsbe vezető út', 93–94. Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman–Polish*, 116–117, 227–229.

The siege of Vienna ended in an enormous fiasco for the Porte.[172] The next campaign in 1532 had the same result (although the troops did not reach Vienna, this was – in my view – the second Vienna campaign, and not the one in 1683).[173] The Ottoman expansion was halted, the strength of the huge empire proved insufficient to defeat the Habsburgs and their supporters and to drive them out of Central Europe. The year 1532 was one of the most important turning points in the history of the Ottoman Empire and in its relationship with Europe. This was so not only because of the military failure but also because of subsequent developments. On the other three fronts described above the Ottomans' position took a sudden turn for the worse. As noted earlier, Charles V opened the Mediterranean front – to relieve the land front and bringing great relief to the Spaniards. This forced the Ottomans to do likewise, whereby they had to invest immense resources in the fleet and give their attention to both the land and maritime fronts.[174] At the same time, the war with Iran was rekindled (I refer to the campaign of 1533–35), and in no time a far greater Ottoman involvement was necessary in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.[175] There would never be another situation like the one in the 1520s when the sultan's court could concentrate

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[172] Ferdinand Stoller, 'Soliman vor Wien', *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 9–10 (1929–1930) 11–76.

[173] On this, see István Bariska, 'Az 1532. évi török hadjárat történetéhez [To the history of the Ottoman campaign of 1532]', in István Lengvári – József Vonyó (eds.), *Népek együttélése Dél-Pannóniában. Tanulmányok Szita László 70. születésnapjára* [Studies in honour of László Szita on his 70th birthday]. (Pécs, 2003), 11. The "results" of the campaign from the Ottoman angle are summarised in Şahin, *Empire and Power,* 85–87.

[174] On the beginnings of the reshuffling, see İdris Bostan, 'The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid', in Elisabeth Zachariadou (ed.), *The Kapudan Pasha: His Office and His Domain*. (Rethymnon, 2002), 241–251.

[175] Allouche, *The Origins,* 102–103, 138–139, 150–151, as well as Özbaran's studies mentioned above.

its attention and the military strength of the state on a single front for some years.

After this period, Süleyman's policies became increasingly muddled. Several times he tried to simultaneously achieve success in different regions (as in 1537–38 and 1552), resulting in a number of negative consequences in the long term.[176] Though the Ottomans had scored an undeniable victory in the Mediterranean, this brought little economic gain for their society. For the sake of short-term political advantages, Süleyman also broadened the system of capitulations, which subsequently led to the economic penetration of the empire by the European countries.[177] A number of lesser or greater successes in the Near East and the Indian Ocean were not enough to stave off the subsequent trading superiority of the West (or the North).[178] The Safavid dynasty put the respite to good use in Iran, and when the Ottomans turned against the country once again, they found they were no longer able to achieve what might have been possible earlier: the elimination for good of an annoying neighbour. The wars waged repeatedly until the mid-seventeenth century were rather fruitless and incurred enormous expenses for only transitory gains. An Italian observer wrote in 1594: "Persia is to the sultan as is Flanders to the Spanish king or Crete to the Venetians, as the expenses are extremely high, and the income is insignificant. There is no gain from the acquired lands."[179]

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[176] See the second chapter of the volume.

[177] For a recent well-balanced evaluation of the capitulary regime in the Ottoman Empire, see Umut Özsu, 'Ottoman Empire', in Bardo Fassbender – Anne Peters (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law.* (Oxford, 2012), 429–448.

[178] Even Casale with his delusions about great Ottoman successes in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia (*The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 198–203) was forced to admit this.

[179] Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa. Dritter Theil.* (Gotha, 1855), 580–581: note 2. The areas won by the empire at a great price in 1590 were lost in 1619. Neither the quotation nor the expenditures known to me from the

On the Central European (Hungarian) front too, the outstanding opportunities of the 1520s never returned. What has been said of the Safavids also applied to the Habsburgs: they were never as weak as in those years. The Ottoman attacks had a dual impact on Europe.[180] Where the percieved danger was greatest (the German Empire, Austria, the Kingdom of Hungary, Spain, several states of Italy, etc.) and social forces felt under threat (including the Protestants, especially after 1529 when Luther's position on the Turkish issue changed), people lined up in support of the Habsburgs. And this was particularly true at times of greatest danger. When, however, the Habsburgs gathered strength, the centrifugal forces were reactivated. At such times, the dynasty had to make several concessions in order to garner support against the Porte (in this way the Ottoman offensive promoted the survival of Protestantism).[181] Whatever the course taken by the dynastic, social and religious struggles in the West, the Habsburgs were capable, at the crucial moments, of mobilising sufficient forces to halt the Ottoman advance.

In any evolution of Süleyman's European policy, the central question is whether or not he was aware of these barriers. The answer is that he failed to recognise them at least prior to the late 1520s. Yet he cannot be blamed for this as the barriers were still hardly noticeable.

At the time there was still no indication that the empire might be stopped or that the great clash between the two

end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries seem to support the view of Rhoads Murphey (*Ottoman Warfare,* XVIII) that the eastern border region, roughly 600 miles in length, required no substantial funding from the centre because "the costs of maintaining the Ottoman's presence in this sphere could be offset by relying mostly on local sources".

[180] John Elliott, 'Ottoman–Habsburg Rivalry: The European Perspective', in İnalcık – Kafadar (eds.), *Süleymân the Second*, 153–162. Mackenney, *Sixteenth Century Europe*, 252.

[181] Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism 1521–1555.* (Cambridge, 1959), esp. 111–117.

superpowers of the period with their very different cultures and religions would end indecisively. In the first decade of his rule, Süleyman's position was, in every respect, more favourable than that of Charles V, who had acceded to the throne around the same time. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the world of Islam set out on the same path to integration as that taken by Christian Europe, but it proceeded much further along this route – at least in the western half. The basic difference between the two processes was that whereas Europe sought to overcome medieval discord and disintegration on the basis of competing ("national" and imperial) strategies and having abandoned religious unity, Islam could only envision an end to territorial divisions once the imperial structures and religious unity were in place. For the time being, this latter (the Ottoman) strategy was the more effective.

When Charles V was still taking the initial steps towards uniting his various domains and was still pondering a leading role in Europe, the Ottoman Empire – thanks to Selim's conquests – had already defeated and in part absorbed those countries (Safavid Iran and Mamluk Egypt) against which it had earlier fought tooth and nail for leadership of the Islamic world. Whereas the Papacy – formerly a symbol and representative of Christian unity and defence against the Turks – was fatally weakened by the fierce battles fought between secular princes and by the emergence of the Reformation after 1517, the Ottoman Empire, having obtained the Arab lands and the Muslim holy places, acquired for itself the right to lead the (Western) Islamic world. True, the Ottomans still had to share power with the three other great Islamic powers (as well as with the many Muslim princes of local importance): the Safavids of Persia, the Mughals of India, and the Shibanids of Central Asia. Even so, these empires were in no position to threaten militarily or question the authority of the Ottomans,

who controlled the central Muslim areas as well as the lands bordering Latin Christianity. After the occupation of Egypt, the Ottomans won the support of the Sunni religious scholars, a significant element in Muslim society. In this way, the Ottoman Empire could take a stand as a united Islamic empire on the European front, where it faced a mosaic of warring and divided states.

While the most threatened Christian countries sought in vain for allies in the Ottoman Empire or beyond its eastern borders, the Ottoman state effortlessly broke up the Christian world. Having bound Venice to itself through the Levantine trade and some coercion, the Ottomans soon found themselves approached by the French.[182] While Europe's major princes, with a view to concealing their own "betrayals", claimed to be the defenders of Christians living in the Ottoman Empire and of the holy places in Jerusalem while looking on passively as the Ottoman Empire swallowed up millions of Christians, the Ottoman state accepted Muslims and Jews hounded out of Europe by the same princes, granting them social and economic opportunities. Whereas the struggle of Charles V and Francis I for dominance brought blood, sweat and bankruptcy, the Ottoman Empire, by occupying Egypt and Syria and imposing custom dues on Levantine trade, received an extra amount of revenue that covered the costs of expansion. Whereas under the pressure of a never-ending conflict, the European leaders (the French at the fore) began to establish permanent armies,[183] the Ottoman sultans had already possessed such an army for a century and a half: the janissary corps (not to mention the rest of the court mercenary troops), which had been

[182] Veinstein, 'Les capitulations franco-ottomanes de 1536', 71–88. He argues (not quite convincingly) that there were no valid capitulations given to the French state or king before 1569.

[183] Practically, the process gained momentum only in the late seventeenth century, see David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge, New York, 2012), 260–327.

armed with guns since the second half of the fifteenth century. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman rulers, having kept abreast of technological developments in Europe, were equipping the army with modern artillery (including cannons and guns).[184] At that time, the Ottoman army was evidently bigger, better organised and able to more rapidly mobilise than the forces of any European country or military alliance. Thanks to the forward-looking policies of Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512), the Ottoman Empire had transformed itself into a major maritime power in the Mediterranean by the sixteenth century. Its fleet was able to defeat the Venetians in open battle, and thanks to developments implemented under Selim, Süleyman could even compete with the Spanish fleet of King and Emperor Charles V.

No wonder perhaps that after his Mohács triumph Süleyman entered the battle for control of the world. Wherever he looked, he could see only advantages for such action. All sober prognoses indicated an enormous superiority, and it was not until after the two campaigns against Vienna that the errors in the calculations were realised. After 1532, however, Süleyman's assessment of the situation and his policy display more and more irrational signs. Apparently, he was unwilling to take note of the changing balance of power, and while he was forced to exert increasing efforts on all fronts, he refused to give up the dream of subduing Vienna.[185] Instead of aiming at a decisive battle and continuing the political manoeuvring (retaining Szapolyai's vassal kingdom, etc.), he ought to have seized the whole of Hungary at the turn of the 1530s, when he had the last chance to do so. This might have delayed (if

[184] Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*.

[185] Rhoads Murphey and Kaya Şahin, too, are of the opinion that the Ottoman imperial programme had come to a deadlock by the 1530s. See Rhoads Murphey, 'Ottoman Expansion, 1451–1556. II. Dynastic Interest and International Power Status, 1503–56', in Geoff Mortimer (ed.), *Early Modern Military History, 1450–1815.* (Houndmills, New York, 2004), 70. Şahin, *Empire and Power,* 108–109.

not prevented) the construction of the eastern Habsburg Empire.[186] Instead, he temporarily ignored the region after 1532, leaving Ferdinand I enough time to lay the foundations of the Habsburg military defence system and to introduce the most up-to-date forms of warfare (e.g. the joint use of firearms and pikes). When, hopelessly too late, Süleyman resumed the interrupted invasion in the first half of the 1540s, the Ottoman army and military organisation had already lost its earlier decisive superiority.[187] By 1545 Süleyman had realised that he could not reach Western Hungary, let alone Vienna; he had to be content with devouring John Szapolayi's areas. Then both he and his successors were forced to create a border defence system and maintain it in the middle of Hungary at unprecedented cost. The resources of the empire were squandered in a frontier war without prospects. In the years following the Ottoman–Habsburg peace (1547), signs of the overburdening of the central treasury were unmistakable.[188]

It is beyond doubt that the acquisition of land in Central Europe was primarily sought by the military-bureaucratic elite (including the military establishment in Rumelia).[189] Süleyman was unable and probably unwilling to oppose this ambition (at least in the first two or two and a half decades of his rule). Whatever the more recent opinions about his figure, the sheer

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[186] Only about one third of Hungary was under Habsburg rule, but even in its divided state it subsequently provided a third of the empire's revenues and contributed a lot to the defences (human resource, food, raw materials, etc.), albeit in a manner that is hard to quantify. See Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century*. (East European Monographs, DCCXXXV.) Translated from the Hungarian by Thomas J. and Helen D. DeKornfeld. (Boulder, Colorado, 2009), 89–155.

[187] John F. Guilmartin, Jr., 'Ideology and Conflict: The Wars of the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1606', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18:4 (1988) 735–736. Cf. also the important observations in Géza Dávid, 'Ottoman Armies and Warfare, 1453–1603', in Faroqhi – Fleet (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, Vol. 2, 315–319.

[188] On this, see the end of the second chapter.

[189] Hess also shared this opinion: 'The Evolution', 1914, 1916.

THE CAMPAIGNS OF SÜLEYMAN I 1521–1566

- Campaigns against Hungary and the Habsburgs
- Campaigns against Persia
- Campaigns against Avlonya (Corfu) and Moldavia
- Campaign against Rhodes
- Ottoman Empire in 1566
- Vassal states in 1566
- Lands disputed with Persia

number of wars that were waged with his personal participation proves that he gave priority to the Central European, Hungarian, or broadly speaking, Christian front(s), as nine of the thirteen campaigns were led in this direction (see italics).[190]

1.	*1521*	*Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade*
2.	1522–1523	Rhodes
3.	*1526*	*Mohács*
4.	*1529*	*Vienna*
5.	*1532*	*Vienna (Kőszeg/Güns)*
6.	1534–1535	Iraq
7.	*1537*	*Rome (Avlonya)*
8.	*1538*	*Moldavia*
9.	*1541*	*Buda*
10.	*1543*	*Vienna (Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, etc.)*
11.	1548–1549	Iran (Tabriz)
12.	1553–1555	Iran (Nakhchivan)
13.	*1566*	*Vienna (Szigetvár)*

Nor should it be forgotten that Süleyman was guided not only by sober foreign and domestic political calculations but also by profound ideological considerations. There is no reason to question that he personally conceived of the wars of the dynasty as "religious wars" (jihad).[191] Kemalpaşazade, one of the

[190] Similar is the position of Cemal Kafadar, 'The Ottomans and Europe', in Thomas A. Brady, Jr. – Heiko A. Oberman – James D. Tracy (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation. Vol. 1: Structures and Assertions.* (Leiden, 1994), 609–610 (though in his view he led 10 campaigns out of the 13 against the West – evidently he added in the siege of Rhodes).

[191] See, for example, his report about the battle of Zsarnó (Havale, near Belgrade), in which the troops stationed along the border crushed John Szapolyai's army, written in a highly solemn, religious tone in mid-May 1515, when he was still heir to the throne (İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, E. 5438), or his order to his subjects in 1532 on the occasion of the "Vienna campaign" (İstanbul, Bayezid Devlet Kütüphanesi,

empire's intellectual pillars, stated, recalling a personal meeting with Süleyman in late 1526, that the ruler firmly believed that "his success in this jihad [the victory at Mohács] was due to the assistance of divine mercy and that the driving into slavery of the army of evil gyaurs and their *bey*s and such an unprecedented and unrepeatable defeat on the battlefield were thanks not to human efforts but to the power of the eternal."[192] But there was more to it than that. From the turn of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman sultans regarded themselves as the heirs to the ancient conqueror Alexander the Great. Their repeated victories turned this idea from political ideology into the personal conviction of the rulers during Mehmed II's reign.[193] Süleyman inherited from his great-grandfather the belief that he was destined to unite the East and the West. It is no accident that Paolo Giovio, who was well informed of Süleyman's intentions, wrote the following in his book on the Ottomans submitted to Charles V in 1532: "Believe me, your Highness, Sultan Süleyman has nothing else on his mind but occupying your lands, because by nature he longs for glory, and his many victories and the size of his empire have made him audacious and reckless. I have heard from trustworthy people that he often claims that he is rightfully due the Roman and the entire Western Empire, because he is the legal successor to Emperor Constantine, who moved the empire to Constantinople."[194] On

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Veliyüddin Ef. 1970, 56b–57b). See further the testimony of the chancellor Celalzade Mustafa, a chief architect of the imperial project of Süleyman: Şahin, *Empire and Power,* passim.

[192] Kemal Paşa-zâde, *Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman. X. Defter*. (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, XVIII/13.) Hazırlayan Şefaettin Severcan. (Ankara, 1996), 319–320.

[193] Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power. The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. (Cambridge, London), 1991, 11–13.

[194] Paolo Giovio, *Commentario de le cose de' Turchi.* A cura di Lara Michelacci. (Bologna, 2005), 156. On the importance of *sedes imperii* as a legitimising principle in Ottoman–European relations, see Peter Thorau, 'Von Karl dem Großen zum Frieden von Zsitva Torok [Zsitvatorok]. Zum Weltherrschaftsanspruch Sultan Mehmeds II. und dem Wiederaufleben des Zweitkaiserproblems nach der Eroberung Konstantinopels', *Historische Zeitschrift* 279:2 (2004) 316–330.

the coins minted in the year of his accession, he named himself "sovereign of power and victory on land and at sea" still continuing in Mehmed's footsteps. Meanwhile, from his father Selim, he took the titles of Iranian "shah" and "protector of the two holy cities", complementing them with the title "*sultan* of the two continents and *hakan* of the two seas" – a clear formulation of his claim to dominion over the whole world.[195] Though apparently he did not use these titles on his coins, he was pleased to be addressed as "world conqueror" (*sahib-kıran*, lit. "the master of the auspicious conjunction") and "messiah" *(mahdi)* of the last times, similarly to his two predecessors.[196] For a long time (at least from the reign of Mehmed II onwards) the idea that the wars of conquest in Europe were part of a cosmic struggle between East and West in which the forces of the East – at the forefront the rising and westward heading Sun, that is, the padishah – would be victorious and would take revenge for the grievances suffered at the hands of Christians, loomed large in the Ottoman conciousness and in Ottoman political ideologies. It is telling that a poet named Behari, who had fought in the battle of Mohács, used this particular conceptual framework in the immediate aftermath of the clash to describe the events of the campaign and that Kemalpaşazade

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[195] István Nyitrai, 'The Third Period of the Ottoman–Safavid Conflict: Struggle of Political Ideologies (1555–1578)', in Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano–Turkic Cultural Contacts*, 164–165.

[196] Barbara Flemming, 'Sāḥib-ḳirān und Mahdī: Türkische Endzeiterwartungen im ersten Jahrzehnt der Regierung Süleymāns', in György Kara (ed.), *Between the Danube and the Caucasus. A Collection of Papers Concerning Oriental Sources on the History of the Peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe.* (Budapest, 1987), 43–62 (he had the title *sahib-kıran* engraved in the candle-sticks taken as booty from Buda in 1526, too; *ibid.*, 62). Cornell H. Fleischer, 'The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân', in Veinstein (publ.), *Soliman le Magnifique*, 159–177. For a Eurasian context of the universalist political ideas and titles of the Ottoman ruler (including various elements of the *sahib-kıran* and *mahdi* ideologies) and for their importance in the early modern empire building, see Şahin, *Empire and Power*, esp. 1–12, 53–57, 61–62, 67–68, 188–191.

interpreted the invasion of 1521 as revenge for the one-time invasion of Asia Minor by German crusaders.[197]

This vision, together with the matchless power and military strength he disposed of, strongly influenced the development of his character already in his youth. From the moment he occupied the throne he behaved quite unlike his forefathers: he was unapproachable, wrapped in silence during public appearances (e.g. when receiving envoys), and later introduced a sign language in the inner section of the palace.[198] During his reign he tried to create the image of a mystical and impersonal authority elevated above his subjects and the world. It can be presumed that for a man who viewed himself as so exceptional, it became a personal issue to achieve a victory over the Habsburg ruler Charles V airing similar claims. In my view, this human vanity is reflected in the above list of battles. In addition to the ruler's sense of mission, this feature largely accounts for the mistaken European policy after 1532.

After the battle of Mohács the court goldsmith Ahmed Tekelü made a yataghan for Süleyman.[199] Reliefs adorn both sides of the blade of the splendid weapon showing a *simurg* (or *anka* in Arabic) fighting against a dragon. István Vígh, a historian of arms, has claimed that it is not accidental that the body of the mythical bird is wholly gilded while only a part of the dragon is

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[197] Balázs Sudár, 'A végítélet könyve. Oszmán elbeszélő forrás a mohácsi csatáról [The Book of Doomsday. An Ottoman epic about the battle of Mohács]', *Történelmi Szemle* 52:3 (2010) 399, 403, 405, 410. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. (New York, London, 1982), 165. As these pieces of evidence make clear, "a narration of the early modern period predictated upon a [conceptual and] religious dichotomy dividing East and West" (Norton, 'Blurring the Boundaries', 4, 19) was not a pure invention of European humanists or modern historians but was also endorsed by the contemporary Ottoman actors.

[198] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 25–30.

[199] *Nagy Szulejmán és kora / Kanunî Sultan Süleyman ve Çağı. 1994. szeptember 7. – 1995. január 8. /7 Eylül 1994 – 8 Ocak 1995. Budavári palota „A" épület / Buda Sarayı „A" Binası.* A kötetet összeállította és a bevezető tanulmányt írta / Albümü derleyen ve giriş incelemesini yazan Ibolya Gerelyes. (Budapest, 1994), 79/1–3. The *simurg* is a huge bird nesting on top of Mount Kaf (Elburz) whose feathers have healing power; in Islamic mysticism it is the symbol of divinity; see F. C. de Blois, 'Sīmurgh', in *EI*[2], IX, 615a.

gilt, and most of its body is black. Vígh's interpretation is that Süleyman, the *simurg*, was fighting against the dragon – King Louis of Hungary – and would overcome the forces of darkness, Christianity, with his supernatural strength.[200] The prediction did not come true: the dragon grew new heads and the Ottoman *simurg* was beating with broken wings.

[200] István Vígh, 'Szülejmán jatagánja és a mohácsi csata [Süleyman's yataghan and the battle of Mohács]', *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 117:2 (2004) 730–738.

CHAPTER II

THE CAPTURE OF BUDA AND THE ROAD TO SZIGETVÁR

A DECISIVE DECADE (1541–1550)

As we have seen in the first chapter, the campaigns launched in 1529 and in 1532 to occupy Vienna proved that the sultan had greatly overestimated his army's strength. Though the Ottoman army managed to reach the Austrian frontier and neared Vienna, it was not in a position to carry out sustained military operations at such a distance. The events of 1532 clearly indicated that, relying on the manpower and material resources of the German Empire, the Habsburgs were capable of repelling a direct Ottoman threat to their core territories. The sultan, however, was reluctant to learn the obvious lessons from his western adventure. In the aftermath of his victories in the 1530s on the Iranian and the Mediterranean fronts (the latter being opened against the other Habsburg, Emperor Charles V), he returned his attention to Central Europe, seeking to take up where he had left off in 1532.

To bring the supply bases closer to Vienna, in 1541 he occupied Buda and established the first Ottoman province (*vilayet-i Budun*) in Hungary. Initially, he also planned to annex the whole of the territory controlled by John Szapolyai and to capture the leaders of the pro-Turkish party, but after the easy seizure of the Hungarian capital he modified his strategy. He nominally granted the region beyond the River Tisza (Hungarian: "Tiszántúl") and Transylvania – both of which lay outside the main direction of conquest – to John Sigismund (*de facto* to his guardian, Friar George Martinuzzi, a confidant of the late King John Szapolyai) and let the region around Temesvár be governed by Péter Petrovics (another proxy of John Szapolyai). These two statesmen were, however, not appointed to office as allied Hungarian leaders but as Ottoman district governors (*sancakbeyi*s) of special status. Their task was to prepare for direct Ottoman rule in these eastern territories in the event of

the defeat of Ferdinand I of Habsburg. Evidently, Süleyman was not considering the establishment of an eastern Hungarian or Transylvanian vassal state at that time, for he had resolutely rejected a proposal of such nature made by the Transylvanian magnate István Mayláth in late 1540.[201]

Believing that as legitimately elected king he was entitled to all the accessories of the crown, Ferdinand I also held a claim to the eastern parts of Hungary. Thus, the future of the Tiszántúl region and Transylvania became dependent on the outcome of an inevitable conflict between the two great powers, the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. The upcoming clash was also destined to determine the fate of the whole of Central Europe.

The first act in the struggle ran its course in 1542 and 1543. First, the German imperial troops besieged Pest, but their efforts ended in complete failure.[202] Then, in the following year, the sultan turned his army against Vienna once more. While achieving several notable successes in the course of his campaign (he conquered Valpó [Valpovo, Ottoman Valpova], Pécs [Peçuy], Siklós [Şikloş], Tata, Székesfehérvár [İstolni Belgrad] and Esztergom [Estergon], thereby greatly strengthening Buda's position), he failed to reach Vienna, his main target.[203] This setback, however, did not discourage him. Indeed, in 1544 he set about preparing for an even more ambitious and daring military enterprise. Meanwhile the local Ottoman forces kept expanding the frontiers of the occupied territory, conquering Visegrád (Vişegrad), Nógrád (Novigrad) and Hatvan. The orders of the

201 Fodor, 'Ottoman Policy', 324–333.

202 Árpád Károlyi, *A Német Birodalom nagy hadi vállalata Magyarországon 1542-ben.* [The great military campaign of the German Empire in Hungary in 1542]. (Budapest, 1880).

203 Gábor Barta, 'Adalékok az 1543. évi török hadjárat történetéhez [A contribution to the history of the Ottoman campaign of 1543 in Hungary]', *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 106:3 (1993) 3–17. Mehmet İpçioğlu, 'Kanunî Süleyman'ın Estergon (Esztergom) Seferi 1543: Yeni Bir Kaynak', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 10 (1990) 137–159.

imperial council offer us glimpses of these preparations from December 1544 onwards.

The Christian envoys in Istanbul had been warning for some months that the sultan was planning a great military campaign against Vienna in the following spring.[204] The rumours were also fuelled by the fact that the sovereign moved to Edirne during the autumn. In past decades his wintering in Edirne and hunting in its vicinity had been associated with the planning and organisation of military campaigns against Hungary. And that is exactly what happened this time. Between December and the end of April, a series of orders were issued for the mobilisation of the required material and human resources. Instructions were given for the inspection of the weaponry and munitions in Ottoman Hungary, for setting up the cannons, gun carriages and the Mediterranean and Danube flotillas, for mustering the Wallachian oarsmen and draught horses, for gathering provisions for the army and shipping them to storehouses in Buda and in Belgrade, and, finally, for the mobilisation of the armed forces of the empire, especially the *timar*-holding *sipahi*s. Originally, the cavalry troops of 116 districts were expected to go to war, but there were uncertainties even at the outset as to which forces were to be deployed. Then, by mid-April, it became clear that the lengthy and costly preparations had been to no avail: the campaign was "postponed" *(tehir olundı)* as stated by an entry subsequently written on the order of April 12.[205]

[204] Mihnea Berindei – Gilles Veinstein, *L'Empire ottoman et les pays roumains 1544–1545. Études et documents.* (Documents et recherches sur le monde byzantin, néohellénique et balkanique, 14.) (Paris, Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 17. The two authors thoroughly discuss this matter, especially the duties of the Voivode of Wallachia, on the following pages.

[205] İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, E. 12321, 212b. This *mühimme defteri* has been published by Sahillioğlu, *Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi H. 951–952 Tarihli*. The entry above the order referred to here, however, has been rendered incorrectly (*ibid.*, 370). The firmans of the collection relating to Hungary and Central Europe were also published (both in Ottoman-Turkish original and Hungarian translation) in Dávid – Fodor,

The reasons for the sultan's decision are still unclear. It seems likely, however, that the Ottoman leadership had been rattled by the immense costs of recent land and sea campaigns, discords among the members of the royal family, and, as external causes, the cooperation between Georgia and Iran and the peace treaty concluded between the French king, Francis I, and Emperor Charles V in September 1544. In March 1544 they started negotiations with the envoys of Ferdinand I in Istanbul.[206] A lengthy and eventful bargaining process then began, which soon included the envoy of Charles V, who made a truce for one and a half years with Süleyman on November 10. In the end, the negotiating parties concluded a peace treaty for five years on June 19, 1547 in Istanbul. The sultan insisted on the fiction of his possessing the whole of Hungary. Even so, *de facto,* he acknowledged the rule of Ferdinand I in the territories that were indeed in Habsburg hands. In the Ottoman interpretation this is why Ferdinand paid the annual "tribute" of 30,000 gold coins (viewed as an "honourable gift", or *Ehrengeschenk,* by the Austrians), which was part of the treaty.[207]

"Affairs of State Are Supreme"; the relevant entry: *ibid*., 180–183: No. 123. The orders pertaining to the Rumanian principalities have been first brought out in facsimiles and French translations by Berindei – Veinstein, *L'Empire ottoman,* 145–300.

[206] Pál Török, *I. Ferdinánd konstantinápolyi béketárgyalásai 1527–1547* [The peace negotiations of King Ferdinand I in Constantinople 1527–1547]. (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből, XXIV/12.) (Budapest, 1930), 94. Cf. *Austro–Turcica 1541–1552. Diplomatische Akten des habsburgischen Gesandtschaftsverkehrs mit der Hohen Pforte im Zeitalter Süleymans des Prächtigen*. (Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 95.) Bearbeitet von Srećko M. Džaja unter Mitarbeit von Günter Weiß. In Verbindung mit Mathias Bernath herausgegeben von Karl Nehring. (München, 1995), 37–41: Nos. 7–8, 89–90: No. 31. *A Chronicle of the Early Safavīs Being the Aḥsanu't-Tawārīkh of Ḥasan-i-Rūmlū*. Vol. II. (English Translation). Translated by C. N. Seddon. (Baroda, 1934), 138–139.

[207] Ernst Dieter Petritsch, 'Der habsburgisch–osmanische Friedensvertrag des Jahres 1547', *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 38 (1985) 49–80, esp. 54, 58. Cf. Idem, 'Tribut oder Ehrengeschenk? Ein Beitrag zu den habsburgisch–osmanischen Beziehungen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', in Elisabeth Springer – Leopold Kammerhofer et al. (eds.), *Archiv und Forschung. Das*

The compromise between the two great powers and their sharing of territories in Hungary gradually put the eastern parts of the country into a new orbit. As indicated in the orders of the imperial council of this period, the two "*sancak*s" created by Süleyman had been under close Ottoman supervision even before the peace treaty of 1547. Indeed, Istanbul had given instructions to Friar George Martinuzzi and to Petrovics in the same manner as to the Ottoman *sancakbeyi*s. Similarly to the latter, the former were required to provide provision for the Ottoman army; in addition, they were constantly under pressure to hand over fortresses. The absence of a further decisive campaign meant that Transylvania and Temesköz avoided annexation. The sultan and his advisors seem to have seen a feasible solution in the two political entities, which were relatively independent in their internal affairs and dependent on the Ottoman rather than the Habsburg court.[208] Petrovics turned out to be a willing and submissive partner, as his s*ancak* was adjacent to the Ottoman territories and he also needed support from the Porte to counterbalance the increasing pressure from Friar George (not to mention the fact that Petrovics also hoped that Istanbul would assist in protecting the interests of the young prince and Queen Isabella).[209]

In contrast, the sultan's court badly misjudged Friar George. Since the fall of Buda, the friar had been working incessantly on

Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte Österreichs und Europas. (Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit, 20.) (Wien, München, 1993), 49–58. Sándor Papp, 'Kárrendezési kísérletek a hódoltságban az 1547. évi békekötés után [Attempts at compensation in Ottoman Hungary after the peace treaty of 1547]', *Keletkutatás* 1996. ősz – 2002. tavasz, 153–155.

[208] Berindei – Veinstein, *L'Empire ottoman*, 31–40.

[209] Gábor Barta, *Az erdélyi fejedelemség születése* [The birth of the Principality of Transylvania]. (Magyar História) (Budapest, 1979), 103–104.

bringing Transylvania under the sway of the Habsburg king.[210] But he had to keep postponing the execution of this plan because of unfavourable military conditions and had to regain the goodwill of the Ottomans over and over again. In 1549, however, the pace of events quickened. In September, representatives of Friar George and the king renewed an agreement aimed at uniting Transylvania and the so-called Partium (an area of eastern Hungary situated between the Ottoman territories and Transylvania which would be incorporated into Transylvania in 1571) under Ferdinand's sceptre. They also agreed on compensation for Isabella and John Sigismund and on the appointment of Friar George to govern Transylvania on behalf of the king. While earlier attempts had made little impact, the Treaty of Nyírbátor of September 8, 1549 resulted in quite a stir in high politics. The displeased Queen Isabella and her followers had their share in fuelling the discord, openly opposing the Nyírbátor arrangement. In the summer of 1550, they even made formal accusations against Friar George at the Porte. In the meantime the sultan's court had come to know of the negotiations between Friar George and Ferdinand I, but for the time being it made do with only ordering, by way of a messenger *(çavuş)*, the Transylvanians to depose the governor and kill him. A civil war thus broke out in Transylvania in September, but by the end of the year the supporters of the queen (who were also assisted by the Voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia, the pasha of Buda and other Ottoman contingents) had been defeated by the troops of Friar George.

[210] For his goals, motivations and the key events, see Gábor Barta, *Vajon kié az ország?* [Whose is the country?]. (Labirintus) (Budapest, [1988]).

THE TRANSYLVANIAN CRISIS OF 1551–52 AND THE LIMITS OF IMPERIAL POLITICS

When, in the summer of 1551, Ferdinand I officially made known to the Porte the occupation of Transylvania,[211] Süleyman had but one means to protect his "possession": military action. He sent off his armies and vassals to attack Transylvania from two directions, from the Temesköz and from the east. The smart tactics of Friar George, however, made the Ottoman military leadership apprehensive, and on top of that the military actions did not bring the expected result (i.e. the occupation of Temesvár).[212] The failures of the governor-general *(beylerbeyi)* of Rumelia and the assassination of Friar George at the turn of 1551–52 led the sultan's court to reconsider its strategy and to deploy more powerful forces to resolve the situation.

The events of 1551–52 have been extensively discussed in Hungarian and international scholarship,[213] and so I shall focus in the following on those details and relationships that have tended to be ignored or which cannot be properly assessed without the information furnished by the orders of the Ottoman imperial council.

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[211] The date of Ferdinand's statement is corrected and his arguments are summarised by Sándor Papp, 'Die diplomatischen Bemühungen der Habsburger um Siebenbürgen in den Jahren 1551–1552', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 89 (1999) 109–133, esp. 111. On Ferdinand's administration of Transylvania, see Teréz Oborni, *Erdély pénzügyei I. Ferdinánd uralma alatt 1552–1556* [The finances of Transylvania under the rule of Ferdinand I 1552–1556]. (Fons Könyvek, 1.) (Budapest, 2002).

[212] On the Hungarian war of 1551–52, see Imre Szántó, *Küzdelem a török terjeszkedés ellen Magyarországon. Az 1551–52. évi várháborúk.* [Struggle against the Ottoman expansion in Hungary: the siege wars of 1551–52]. (Budapest, 1985).

[213] Szántó, *Küzdelem.* Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant,* Vol. IV, 565–586. For the Habsburg diplomatic documents of these years, see *Austro-Turcica 1541–1552.*

The sultan's participation in the military campaign in Hungary

In early 1552, Süleyman was preoccupied by the situation in the Ottoman–Iranian–Georgian borderlands where a possible Safavid attack posed a real threat. He wrote the following in his order to the governor-general of Erzurum on January 28: "Surely, this summer my imperial departure shall be for that region."[214] In the following month, however, the crisis in Transylvania arose, and the probability of sending the entire Ottoman army against Hungary and of the sultan personally commanding the "imperial campaign" increased. The imperial council had been mobilising the troops from mid-January. It called the eastern *beylerbeyi*s, the janissaries stationed in the Rumelian districts and the Voivode of Wallachia to arms and began an inspection of the fortresses in the province of Buda. The governor-general of Rumelia, at war since the preceding year, was informed about the death of Friar George and was instructed to keep an eye on Transylvania and to make a comprehensive survey of the roads between the Danube and Temesvár and to assess where bridges needed to be built (a latter order shows that such an assessment was made for the whole of Transylvania). An extraordinary war tax in kind *(nüzül)* was levied to obtain provisions from the subjects of the empire, Wallachia and Moldavia. Further, the two voivodeships and the districts of Semendire (Smederevo, Szendrő), Vidin, Niğbolu (Nikopol), İzvornik (Zvornik), Alacahisar (Kruševac) and Bosna (Bosnia) were instructed to round up more than 100,000 sheeps. The imperial council also arranged for the collection of victuals and ordered the preparation of transport ships on the Danube (for which the *sancak*s on the Lower Danube became primarily responsible).

[214] İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 40a.

The Voivode of Wallachia was prohibited twice from selling foodstuffs to the allegedly starving Transylvanians.

Nevertheless, as time went by, more and more signs indicated that despite the hints and allusions, the ruler had no intention of coming to Hungary in person. In an order of March 6, 1552 to the governor-general of Van, which once more ordained the mobilisation of ten *vilayet*s, he announced his decision on this matter: "My noble departure shall be for that side (i.e. Asia Minor)."[215] He made it even clearer on March 22, when replying to a letter from his son, Mustafa. In the letter he informed Yahya, the tutor of the prince, as follows: "There is no such matter that would lead me in my felicitous person to move against the miserable heathens. Should an imperial campaign become necessary, my victorious departure shall be for the eastern parts of the country. … For the time being, my noble person does not intend to launch a campaign against the land of the Hungarian infidels."[216] Süleyman thus indicated that he considered the situation on the eastern borders more important or more dangerous in that given moment and that he was planning on expelling the Habsburgs from Transylvania by merely winning over the Transylvanians and sending a smaller number of troops.[217] He entrusted the command of military operations in Hungary to three men: Sokollu Mehmed Pasha,

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215 *Teveccüh-i hümayunum ol caniblerdür*. İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 104b.

216 *Zat-i saadet-simatumuz (?) ile küffar-i haksar üzerine azimet iktiza eder maslahat yokdur. Sefer-i hümayun lazım gelürse teveccüh-i feth-makrunumuz diyar-i şarkadur. … Şimdi zat-i şerifümle küffar-i Macar caniblerine sefer niyeti yokdur.* İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 130b–131a. Dávid – Fodor, *„Affairs of State"*, 340–342: No. 110.

217 Though subsequently he made contradictory statements, this clearly served the purpose of keeping his senior office-holders in both parts of the empire in uncertainty, thus leading them to make even more thorough preparations. He motivated them also by exaggerating or suppressing certain information. For instance, he wrote to the *beylerbeyi* of Buda that he was going to send 5,000 janissaries to Hungary, albeit he actually dispatched 2,000 men there.

governor-general of Rumelia, Hadım Ali Pasha, governor-general of Buda, and second vizier Kara Ahmed Pasha. He nominated Ahmed Pasha as commander-in-chief (*serdar*) of the Hungarian campaign (we hear of this for the first time on April 2, 1552), authorizing him to act as he saw fit.

Ottoman military objectives and the expeditionary army

The contents of the orders of the imperial council show that both in the preparatory phase and after the cancellation of the sultan's participation the main Ottoman military goal was the occupation of Transylvania. Beginning in January, many letters were sent to men of all stations in that part of the country and to the two neighbouring voivodes. The essence of the sultan's argument was that the turmoil and problems in Transylvania were due to the treason of Friar George and the fact that he was in cahoots with the Austrians. His death, however, cleared the slate and the sultan offered the Transylvanians an opportunity for repentance: if they came to heel again, took up arms against the intruders and stood in support of John Sigismund and the queen, he would forgive them and they would find favour with him again as his "vassals". If they helped reinstate the earlier situation, Transylvania would be re-established as a *sancak* of the sultan and would be returned to the son of King John. Based on the information it received, the sultan's court sensed that the *Székely*s (*Siculi*) and the Saxons were the principal opponents of the Austrians seizing power, and so in letters of a friendly tone, it made attempts to separate them from the Christian camp.

The planning of military actions began in parallel with political preparations. In the second half of January, when the participation of the sultan was still uncertain, the Ottoman military leadership considered launching a major offensive from several directions. Naturally, it intended the main strike

to be made against Transylvania. According to the first scenario, the troops from the province of Karaman and the armies of the Moldavian voivode and the Crimean khan were to attack from the east under the command of Osman Pasha, governor-general of Karaman. By ravaging and looting the region, they were to discourage the Transylvanians from resisting (as is written in many letters: "Do not leave one stone upon another in Transylvania"). The second and bigger army – even if it was never confirmed in writing – would evidently have been tasked with smashing the Transylvanian defence from another side by invading the Temesköz and then by occupying Transylvania. At the same time, the *bey* of Bosna, Mehmed Pasha, for this purpose appointed commander-in-chief *(serasker)*, was to have marched to Esztergom (Estergon) with soldiers from Bosnia, Pojega (Požega), Buda and Sirem (Syrmium, Szerémség) and with the raiding *akıncı*s given to him to establish a bridgehead providing access to Habsburg Hungary. His further tasks were not detailed, but presumably he would have been expected to block any kind of assistance provided to Transylvania from the territory of Habsburg Hungary. And lastly, a military formation under the command of the district governor *(sancakbeyi)* of Hersek (Herzegovina) was to have attempted a breakthrough at Zagreb by launching an attack with the *akıncı* against the Christian border defence system in Croatia.

This well-formulated plan, which incorporated diversionary elements, was undermined by an attack launched by the *heyduck*s of Mihály Tóth against Szeged (Segedin) at dawn on February 21, as well as by reports concerning the movement of Christian armies in Croatia and the threat posed to Esztergom and Székesfehérvár (İstolni Belgrad). After the *beylerbeyi* of Buda had liberated Szeged and reinforced the defence of his province, the sultan's court amended the military goals and organised the available troops as follows.

1. The Moldavian voivode was entrusted with the task of invading Transylvania from the east together with the *sancakbeyi* of Bursa, Behram (who was commanded first to Nikopol, then to Silistre), the Crimean khan (or the commander delegated on his behalf) and the *sancakbeyi* of Kırk Kilise. Nevertheless, the final setup was established in a flexible manner as reorganisations had to be made several times due to the possibility of Polish and Cossack incursions. The Crimean khan (whose invitation to battle was later rescinded temporarily) did not come to Hungary, but went to carry out a raid on Russia (his arrival in Hungary was made hopeless by the military campaign of the Muscovites against Kazan the same year). Thus, the Tatars played merely a psychological role in operations: for some months, the Ottoman leadership threatened the Transylvanians with an invasion of 30–40,000 marauding Tatars. Concurrently with the manoeuvre of the Moldavian voivode, the combined troops of the Voivode of Wallachia and of Sinan, district governor of Teke, had to raid Transylvania from the south (for a short period of time it seemed the *sancakbeyi* of Aydın would join them, but soon he was commanded to return to Anatolia).

2. Having occupied Temesköz, the main army under the command of Kara Ahmed Pasha was to launch an attack against Transylvania. True, we only know of this latter plan from the allusions of the commands given to the troops that were gathering on the other side and from the repeated reports of the projected smashing of Transylvania on two fronts. Such instructions were presumably transmitted verbally to the commanders-in-chief.

The corps of Kara Ahmed Pasha was composed of the following forces.

a) Court infantry and cavalry elite troops placed directly under him: 2,000 janissaries, armbearers (*silahtar*s; their exact

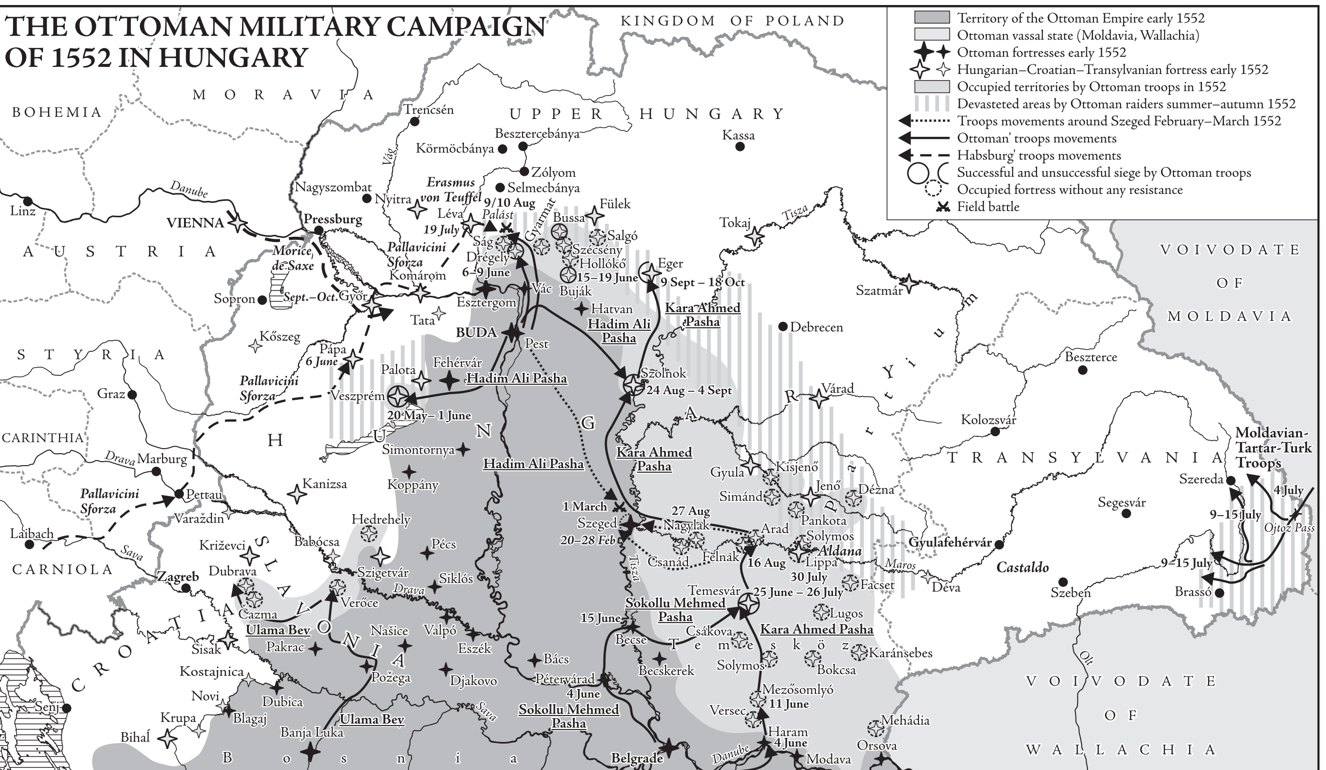
number is unknown, approximately 2,000 men),[218] the salaried men of the right wing (*ulufeciyan-i yemin*; based on earlier and later figures approximately 1,000 men).[219] In addition, the district governor of Silistre with the armoured Tatars of Dobruja, the district governor of Vize with the *sipahi*s of Mora (Morea), a large part of the Rumelian *akıncı*s and conscripted members of the Rumelian paramilitary and peasant soldier units (*müsellem, yürük,* etc.) were also commanded to join the commander-in-chief. Further, many volunteers and 4,000 *cerehor*s (workers) accompanied them.

b) The governor-general of Rumelia with the *sancak*s subordinated to him. They faced a major problem; namely they lacked food at the meeting place in Sirem. Apparently, the food shortage was due to the war in the preceding year. They had no choice but to spend the winter far away from the theatre of war around Üsküb (Skopje) and Köstendil (Kyustendil) and to reassemble there before marching to Semendire.

3. The troops of the governor-general of Buda were to go to Transdanubia and to Upper Hungary (Felföld, Felvidék, today Slovakia) to tie down the Hungarian–Habsburg forces (consequently, the plan for the *bey* of Bosna to cross the Danube at Esztergom would be abandoned). The raid at Szeged resulted in a mild panic among the Ottoman leaders. In response, the pasha of Buda was given, in addition to the troops of his own

218 1,593 and 2,785 people in 1527 and in 1567 respectively (Gyula Káldy-Nagy, 'The First Centuries of the Ottoman Military Organization', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31:2 [1977] 168). In 1543 we see only 297 *silahtar*s in Süleyman's army (cf. İpçioğlu, 'Kanunî Süleyman'ın Estergon seferi', 140) though this simply means that the sultan did not take along the majority of them to Hungary.

219 589 men in 1527 (Ömer Lütfi Barkan, '933–934 [M. 1527–1528] Malî Yılına Ait Bir Bütçe Örneği', *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 15:1–4 [1953–1954] 300) and 1,337 men in 1567 (Ömer Lütfi Barkan, 'H. 974–975 [M. 1567–1568] Malî Yılına Âit Bir Osmanlı Bütçesi', *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 19:1–4 [1957–1958] 306). In 1543, 232 *ulufeci*s of the right wing participated in the military campaign in Hungary (İpçioğlu, 'Kanunî Süleyman'ın', 140).


THE OTTOMAN MILITARY CAMPAIGN
OF 1552 IN HUNGARY
Territory of the Ottoman Empire early 1552
Ottoman vassal state (Moldavia, Wallachia)
Ottoman fortresses early 1552
Hungarian–Croatian–Transylvanian fortress early 1552
Occupied territories by Ottoman troops in 1552
Devasteted areas by Ottoman raiders summer–autumn 1552
Troops movements around Szeged February–March 1552
Ottoman' troops movements
Habsburg' troops movements
Successful and unsuccessful siege by Ottoman troops
Occupied fortress without any resistance
Field battle
KINGDOM OF POLAND
BOHEMIA
MORAVIA
UPPER HUNGARY
AUSTRIA
STYRIA
CARINTHIA
CARNIOLA
CROATIA
SLAVONIA
HUNGARY
Partium
TRANSYLVANIA
Temesköz
Bosnia
VOIVODATE OF MOLDAVIA
VOIVODATE OF WALLACHIA
Linz
VIENNA
Danube
Pressburg
Nagyszombat
Nyitra
Trencsén
Vág
Körmöcbánya
Besztercebánya
Zólyom
Selmecbánya
Kassa
Erasmus von Teuffel
Léva
19 July
Palást
9/10 Aug
Gyarmat
Bussa
Fülek
Salgó
Szécsény
Hollókő
15–19 June
Ság
Drégely
6–9 June
Pallavicini Sforza
Komárom
Morice de Saxe
Sopron
Sept.–Oct.
Győr
Tata
Esztergom
Vác
Buják
Hatvan
Hadim Ali Pasha
Eger
9 Sept – 18 Oct
Kara Ahmed Pasha
Tokaj
Tisza
Szatmár
Debrecen
Kőszeg
Pápa
6 June
BUDA
Pest
Palota
Fehérvár
Veszprém
20 May – 1 June
Szolnok
24 Aug – 4 Sept
Várad
Beszterce
Kolozsvár
Graz
Simontornya
Koppány
Drava
Marburg
Pettau
Kanizsa
Varaždin
Laibach
Sava
Zagreb
Križevci
Dubrava
Babócsa
Hedrehely
Szigetvár
Pécs
Siklós
Cazma
Verőce
Ulama Bey
Sisak
Pakrac
Našice
Valpó
Eszék
Kostajnica
Požega
Djakovo
Novi
Dubica
Blagaj
Krupa
Bihaĺ
Senj
Banja Luka
1 March
Szeged
20–28 Feb
27 Aug
Nagylak
Csanád
Gyula
Kisjenő
Jenő
Dézna
Simánd
Pankota
Arad
Solymos
Aldana
Felnak
16 Aug
Lippa
30 July
Maros
Gyulafehérvár
Castaldo
Déva
Temesvár
25 June – 26 July
Facset
Sokollu Mehmed Pasha
15 June
Becse
Csákova
Lugos
Karánsebes
Becskerek
Bokcsa
Bács
Pétervárad
4 June
Mezősomlyó
11 June
Versec
Haram
Mehádia
Orsova
Belgrade
Modava
Moldavian-Tartar-Turk Troops
Szereda
4 July
9–15 July
Ojtoz Pass
Segesvár
Szeben
Brassó
Olt

province, the district governors of İzvornik, Semendire, Sirem, Vidin, Alacahisar and Vulçitrin (Vučitrn) as well as the timariot cavalry of their *sancak*s. In the end, the soldiery of İzvornik, Semendire, Sirem and Alacahisar showed up (although the troops of Vulçitrin may possibly have arrived too). While the İzvornik troops left the pasha's side after Veszprém (Besperim) had been taken, the rest remained with him for the duration of the campaign.

4. The forces that were stationed in the Bosnian–Croatian (Slavonian) borderlands (the troops of the *sancakbeyi* of Bosna) were to stay put and undertake a defensive task, while the rest (the soldiers of Pojega, Klis and Hersek) would reinforce the armies of the pashas of Buda and Rumelia. In view of the diversionary manoeuvres of the soldiers of the Christian border fortresses and the Ottoman side's fear of the Christian hand-gunners, the district governor of Pojega, Ulama Bey, managed not only to get an authorisation to stay where he was, but also to secure an order commanding the troops of the *sancak*s of Klis and Hersek to the defence of the Slavonian border, as well as 160 garrison soldiers equipped with muskets from the *sancak* of Hersek to his service.[220] Meanwhile, the district governors of Ankara and Üsküb were also sent there as reinforcements, though later on we lose sight of them, the former being most likely deployed to the eastern part of the empire. Eventually, in the course of July, the sultan's court took a new stance, commanding the troops led by Mehmed, the *sancakbeyi* of Bosna, and by Ulama Bey to attack the parts of Slavonia controlled by the Hungarians.

Based on the above incomplete data, the strength of the Ottoman military forces operating in Hungary in 1552 can be established as follows.

[220] For the life and career of Ulama Bey, see Géza Dávid, 'Ulama *bey*, an Ottoman Office-Holder with Persian Connections on the Hungarian Borders', in Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano–Turkic Cultural Contacts*, 33–40.

The army of commander-in-chief Kara Ahmed Pasha	
court mercenary troops (included armourers, artillerymen), ca.	5,000
the troops commanded by the two *sancakbeyi*s, ca.	1,000
The army of the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia, ca.	10,000
The army of the *beylerbeyi* of Buda, ca.	10,000
Troops from Pojega, Klis, Bosna, ca.	4,000
Others (*akıncı*s, soldiers from the two Romanian voivodships and from the districts of Asia Minor)	10,000
Total (including camp folk, etc.), ca.	40,000

The results of the Ottoman military campaign of 1552 in Hungary

1. In the end the greatest achievement of the main Ottoman army in Hungary was the capture of Temesvár (Temeşvar) and the Temesköz region together with Lippa (Lipova) and Solymos (Solmoş), this latter having been occupied without a siege because – according to Hungarian sources – its defender, Bernardo de Aldana, cowardly fled.[221] Though Kara Ahmed Pasha reported just the opposite, it may well be that his aim, as commander-in-chief, was to amplify the military merits before the sultan. Afterwards he marched to Szolnok (Solnok) instead of Transylvania, where he joined the army of the pasha of Buda, easily occupied the castle, and then, with Hadım Ali Pasha, attempted (in vain) to capture Eger (Eğri).[222] As shown

[221] Ferenc Szakály (publ.), *Bernardo de Aldana magyarországi hadjárata [1548–1552]* [The Hungarian campaign of Bernardo de Aldana]. Translated by László Scholz. (Budapest, 1986), 244–246. Cf. Zoltán Korpás, 'La correspondencia de un soldado espanol de las guerras en Hungría a mediados del siglo XVI. Comentarios al diario de Bernardo de Aldana (1548–1552)', *Hispania* 60/3: 206 (2000) 881–910.

[222] Szántó, *Küzdelem*, 153–255. For a historical novel narrating the siege with great accuracy, see Géza Gárdonyi, *Eğri Yıldızları (Egri csillagok)*. Translated from the Hungarian by Erdal Şalikoğlu. (İstanbul, 2013).

by one of his reports, he took a total of 21 fortresses (among them ten royal castles) from the Hungarians. He kept five of these and the rest he claims to have had demolished. Because of the high number of volunteers, he approved of several raids in the region of Szolnok and Várad (Nagyvárad, Oradea, Varat) where, according to his certainly exaggerated figures, his soldiers took 30,000 captives.

In the thick of military actions, Kara Ahmed Pasha set about organising the *vilayet* of Temeşvar, a task that seems – in view of the speed of developments – to have been decided upon some time before.[223] Before anything else, the garrison troops of the chosen centre, Temeşvar, had to be set up. First, 750 men were redeployed to the castle from Becse (Beçey) and Becskerek (Beçkerek). Then, Kara Ahmed Pasha requested authorisation for the recruitment of another 1,600 garrison soldiers.[224] For the fiscal administration of the province, he appointed Mustafa, an employee of the treasury, as finance director *(defterdar)* and, with a daily wage of 40 *akçe*s, he assigned the former judge of Beçe, Abdulfettah, to administer legal services as *kadı*. Being extremely familiar with the borderlands in Hungary, Kasim

223 Some of this information was used by Gyula Káldy-Nagy (*A budai szandzsák 1559. évi összeírása* [The cadastral survey of 1559 of the sanjak of Buda]. [Pest megye múltjából, 3.] [Budapest, 1977], 10: note 2), Pál Fodor ('Das Wilajet von Temeschwar zur Zeit der osmanischen Eroberung', *Südost-Forschungen* 55 [1996] 25–44) and by Cristina Feneşan in her monograph on Ottoman culture in the province of Temeşvar (*Cultura otomană a vilayetului Timişoara*. [Timişoara, 2004], esp. 25–55). On the 450th anniversary of the occupation of Temesvár by the Ottomans, the University of Timişoara published a book that, in summing up the available information, contains references to the establishment of the province too: *Vilayetul Timişoara (450 de ani de intemeiere a paşalâcului 1552–2002)*. (Timişoara, 2002).

224 The only pay register so far available for these years provides information about the soldiers deployed here and to Lipova; see İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Maliyeden Müdevver, 77. In actual fact, 787 soldiers were transferred from the two mentioned fortresses, 496 of which were sent to Temeşvar and 291 to Lipova. On this, see Klára Hegyi, *A török hódoltság várai és várkatonasága* [The Ottoman fortresses and fortress garrisons in Hungary]. (História könyvtár. Kronológiák, adattárak, 9.) Vol. III. (Budapest, 2007), 1351.

Pasha was given the post of governor-general of Temeşvar with a revenue grant of 800,000 *akçe*s. Prior to this, he had been appointed to administer the double *sancak* of Beçe–Beçkerek, then Lipova and from here he was reassigned to Temeşvar.[225] In Kara Ahmed Pasha's view, the *vilayet* of Temeşvar was a "wedge" or "cornerstone" *(köşe)* which, in conjunction with Buda and Bosnia, would help to protect Ottoman interests in Central Europe.[226]

In contrast to Kara Ahmed Pasha's obvious accomplishments, the attack against Transylvania from the other side of the Carpathian Mountains resulted only in a very modest success. As mentioned above, the military forces of the Crimean khan failed to show up, while the district governor of Kırk Kilise received orders to defend Özü because of the unrest of the Cossacks. Meanwhile, the Voivode of Wallachia together with the district governor of Teke acted to sabotage the ordered incursion from the south. In the end, military action was limited to the Voivode of Moldavia and the *sancakbeyi* of Bursa invading the *Székely* region and the environs of Brassó (Brașov) through the Ojtoz (Oituz) pass. They ravaged and looted for nearly sixteen days, but after having been severely beaten by the two vice-voivodes of Transylvania, they rapidly withdrew to the other side of the Carpathian Mountains. In his reports sent to the Porte, the voivode wildly exaggerated his feats: he told about the occupation and the torching of twenty-four fortresses and castles, and about enormous spoils, for which the Porte rewarded him with a robe of honour.

2. Similarly to Kara Ahmed Pasha, the governor-general of Buda, Hadım Ali Pasha, accomplished victory after victory in

[225] For information on his career, see Géza Dávid, 'An Ottoman Military Career on the Hungarian Borders: Kasım *Voyvoda, Bey* and Pasha', in Dávid – Fodor (eds.), *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs*, 265–297.

[226] Cf. Fodor, 'Das Wilajet von Temeschwar', 31.

Transdanubia and at the borders of Nógrád (Novigrad) until the siege of Eger. He captured Veszprém (Besperim), Drégely (Dregel), Ság (Şag), Gyarmat (Garmat), Szécsény (Seçen), Hollókő (Holloka) and Buják (Buyak). His most remarkable feat of arms was at Palást (Plášťovce) where, in an open field battle, he utterly destroyed the royal army led by Erasmus von Teuffel.

3. Following their initial vacillation, the Ottoman forces made considerable progress in Slavonia. In addition to thirteen fortresses of different sizes, the district governors of Pojega and Bosna, Ulama Bey and Mehmed Pasha, captured Verőce (Virovitica) and then proceeded towards Zagreb, reaching the River Csázma (Čazma) and capturing the fortress of Csázma (Zacaşna in Ottoman Turkish), which in subsequent years became the centre of a new *sancak*.

Despite these remarkable achievements, the Ottoman military campaign in Hungary failed to deliver the expected results. In this regard, the following question arises: Why did the Ottoman military command change its original strategy and why did Kara Ahmed Pasha turn against Eger rather than against Transylvania? Imre Szántó, monographer of the events of that year, believed that the idea for a campaign in Transylvania occurred to Ahmed Pasha after the early success in Temesköz. It was then that he sought authorisation from the sultan.[227] Based on Ottoman documents, the reality seems different, since these clearly refer to an earlier plan for attacking Transylvania from two sides. Nevertheless, a certain hesitation on the part of the Ottoman leadership in August is evident. Referring to the Hungarian chronicler Nicolaus Istvánffy, Szántó wrote that the direction of the campaign was changed mainly because Hadım Ali Pasha, the *beylerbeyi* of Buda, urged the occupation of those

[227] Szántó, *Küzdelem*, 137.

castles that represented a threat to Buda and from which attacks could be launched against the territories under Ottoman rule. Szántó also adds that Kara Ahmed Pasha himself was beset by doubts because of reports he had received which may have exaggerated the strength of the Transylvanian defence.[228]

In my opinion, the explanation given by Istvánffy and subsequently by Szántó gets to the core of the problem. The main reason for the disputes and hostility between Ferdinand I and the Ottomans in the preceding years lay in their differing interpretation of the treaty concluded in 1547.[229] According to the ratification document issued by the sultan in the autumn of 1547, Ferdinand I was liable to pay a "tribute" of 30,000 gold coins for the Hungarian territories under his control. The king, however, kept stressing what they had originally agreed upon, namely that out of the 30,000 gold coins only 10,000 was an "honourable gift" *(Ehrengeschenk)*, while the rest (two sums of 5,000 gold coins) was payable as redemption for the estates of two important Hungarian aristocrats: Péter Perényi (who had been arrested by Ferdinand I in 1542) and Bálint Török (who had been arrested and taken to Istanbul by Sultan Süleyman in 1541) and as compensation for other disputed lands. Around 1543, the land which the Ottomans referred to as the "district *(liva)* of Péter Perényi"[230] covered Eger and the Diocese of Eger, the dependencies of which were mainly under Ottoman rule. As the king and the Hungarian nobility saw it, the garrison troops of Eger and Szolnok were entitled – in compliance with the treaty – to pay regular visits to the occupied

[228] Szántó. *Küzdelem*, 138. Cf. Miklós Istvánffy, *Magyarok dolgairól írt históriája. Tállyai Pál XVII. századi fordításában* [His history of the deeds of the Hungarians rendered into Hungarian by Pál Tállyai in the seventeenth century]. Vol. I/2, 13–24. Books. Edited by Péter Benits. (Budapest, 2003), 204.

[229] Petritsch, 'Der habsburgisch–osmanische Friedensvertrag'. Papp, 'Kárrendezési kísérletek'.

[230] Géza Dávid, 'Incomes and Possessions of the *Beglerbegi*s of Buda in the Sixteenth Century', in Veinstein (publ.), *Soliman le Magnifique*, 395: note 3.

territory, collecting taxes from Ottoman subjects and managing the diocesan estates as their own.[231] (With reference to this situation, Ferdinand I followed the same logic when asking for Transylvania from the sultan in the summer of 1551: he would undertake to pay the annual tribute of the province and so gain possession over it, in a similar fashion to the situation in the Ottoman-ruled territories.)[232] The governor-general of Buda was right, therefore, to argue that the liquidation of the two aforementioned castles (Eger and Szolnok) was indispensable to the consolidation of Ottoman rule in Hungary, as this would have eliminated for good all legal and military grounds for Hungarian action in the occupied territories.

Nevertheless, another long-term consideration lay behind the change in strategy. In his description of the siege of Eger, the contemporary János Zsámboki mentions a letter written by Hadım Ali Pasha of Buda to the commander-in-chief Kara Ahmed Pasha.[233] The letter allegedly contained the following: "…He reported that the occupation of Hungary is being greatly hindered by Eger and Szolnok, and so he wishes to put these castles under siege so that nothing should thwart the further victories. He (Ali Pasha) hopes that the capture of these places will succeed with small forces, because the royal army has recently been routed and thus the Christians have no hope of receiving support from anywhere else."[234] If these words were

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231 Papp, 'Kárrendezési kísérletek', 141–160, esp. 153–155.

232 Papp, 'Die diplomatischen Bemühungen', 111–117.

233 Johannes Sambucus was his humanist (Latin) name. He was a noted Hungarian philologist and polymath of the sixteenth century, and from 1565 onward the court historian of Maximilian I, King of Hungary. For the king, who did not know Hungarian, he translated into Latin prose the historical song *Egervár viadaláról* (On the siege of the Castle of Eger) by Sebestyén Tinódi. Zsámboki mentions the letter referred to here in this work.

234 Sándor Mika (ed.), *Magyar történelmi olvasókönyv. II. rész. Magyarország történelme a mohácsi vésztől a tizennyolcadik század végéig* [Hungarian historical reading-book. Second part: A history of Hungary from the battle of Mohács to the end of the eighteenth century]. (Budapest, 1907), 33. Cf. Szántó, *Küzdelem*, 138.

true, it would mean that Hadım Ali Pasha urged a return to the initial Hungarian policy of the Ottomans – an expansion at the expense of Habsburg Hungary and the renewal of the offensive against Ferdinand I. An order issued by the imperial council appears to confirm the accuracy of this information, providing insights into Hadım Ali Pasha's thinking. Accordingly, it seems that after the battle of Palást (August 9–10, 1552) the pasha proposed that "if he received approval for placing new garrisons in the fortresses of Şag, Garmat and Seçen in sufficient number and the demolished parts of the forts were repaired and guarded, then, within a short period of time, the whole of Hungary, the mines, the major cities and castles of the mining district could surely be occupied and thus the revenues from these areas would cover the expenditures."[235] Hadım Ali Pasha seems to have set his sights on conquering one of the richest regions of Hungary at the time, Upper Hungary (Felföld, Felvidék). His starting point was the assumption (often the subject of Ottoman fantasies) that the budget deficit of the occupied territories could be offset by means of revenues received from these areas.[236] These arguments were appealing to Kara Ahmed Pasha; using his granted right of absolute authority (and presumably asking for the approval of the sultan's court), he abandoned the idea of

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[235] *Şöyle ki Şag ve Garmat ve Seçen kalelerine yeniden kifayet mikdarı nefer inayet olunub tamire muhtac olan yerleri termim olunub hıfz ve hiraset oluna, az zamanda külliyen vilayet-i Macar ve banalar semtinde olan maadin ve muazzam varoşlar ve kaleler zabt olunub hasılı harcına yetişmek mukarrerdür.* İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 381b–382b. Dávid – Fodor, *"Affairs of State"*, 596–600: No. 320.

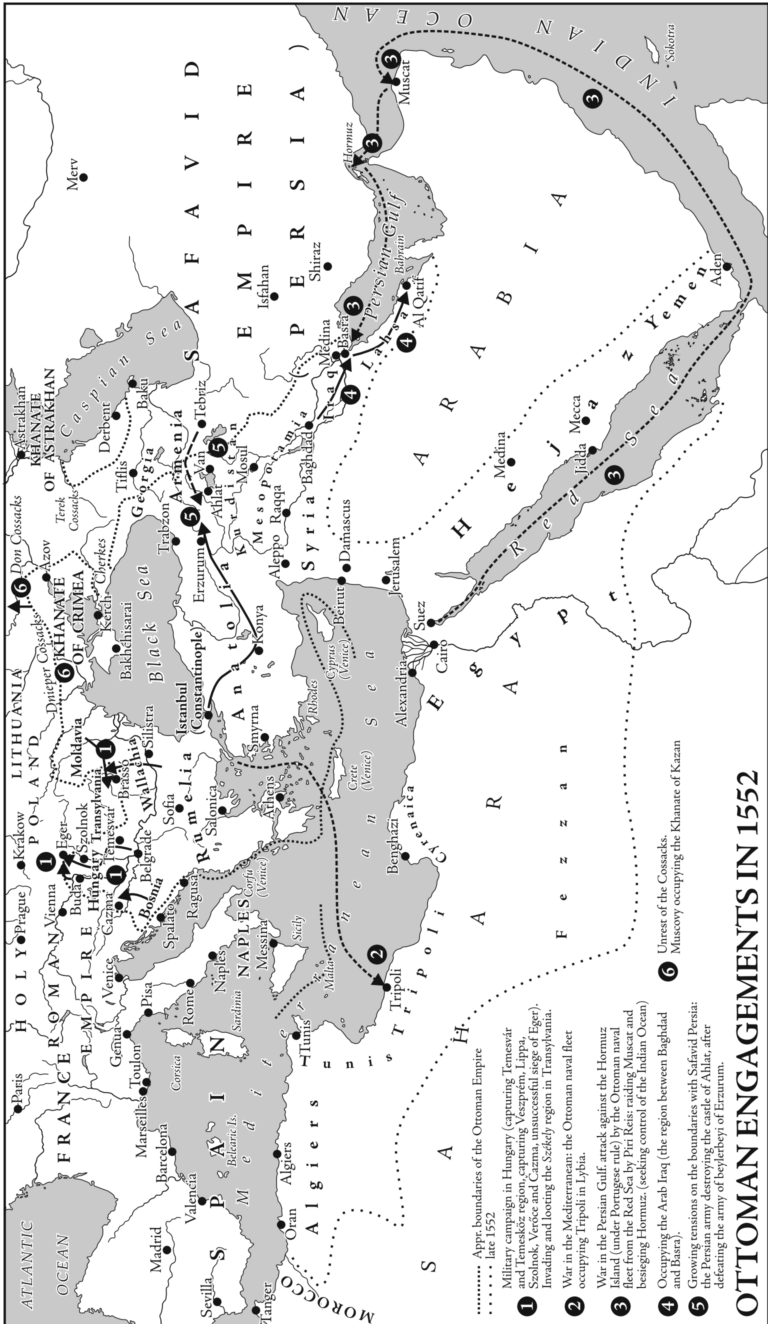
[236] The mines of Upper Hungary had already aroused the attention of the governor-general of Buda in 1549 when the Hungarian grandee Menyhért Balassa, besieged by the troops of Ferdinand I, offered him the castle of Szitnya (Hrad Sitno) together with the neighbouring mines in return for his help in protecting the rest of the fortresses possessed by him. Still, the pasha did not dare breach the peace treaty openly; on this incident, see Szakály (publ.), *Bernardo de Aldana,* 73. An Ottoman document written around 1593 says that a Hungarian mining town would have been worth more than the whole territory conquered from the Persians; cf. Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches... Bd. IV. 1574–1623.* (Pest, 1829), 643.

occupying Transylvania and turned against Szolnok instead. In his decision, he may have been influenced by the absence of the anticipated reinforcements from the east. An additional factor was the murder of the Voivode of Moldavia, who had been expected to mobilise his forces. The assassination of the voivode took place with the support of Giovanni Battista Castaldo, the commander-in-chief of the Habsburg–Hungarian forces sent to defend the Temesköz and Transylvania. There were also reports about the desertion of Ottoman soldiers.

Thanks to Hadım Ali Pasha, the eastern part of Hungary was spared from Ottoman occupation. It set out on the path that would lead to the establishment of the Principality of Transylvania in 1556 and to the acceptance of Ottoman vassal status. Although this was much less than expected by the Ottomans in 1552, in the end they acquiesced to this development since it was not too far from the temporary arrangement made by the sultan's court after 1541 in this region. A bigger problem from the Ottomans' perspective was the failure of the modified plan of 1552, namely the occupation of Eger. The results are well-known: the expansion towards Upper Hungary came to a halt; and with the exception of a couple of years, the *vilayet* of Buda produced constant deficits, while the problem of double taxation in the occupied territories intensified, causing much damage to the conquerors.[237]

Consequently, the year 1552 did not bring gains to the Ottomans commensurate to the losses suffered by the Hungarians. The clearest proof of the Ottoman leadership being of this opinion lies in the fact that apart from a brief entry in one of the firmans of the imperial council confirming that Kara Ahmed Pasha had captured Szolnok and then marched

[237] Ferenc Szakály, *Magyar adóztatás a török hódoltságban* [Hungarian taxation on territory under Ottoman rule]. Budapest, 1981. Klára Hegyi, 'The Financial Position of the *Vilayets* in Hungary in the 16th–17th Centuries', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61:1–2 (2008) 77–85.


OTTOMAN ENGAGEMENTS IN 1552
Appr. boundaries of the Ottoman Empire late 1552
1 Military campaign in Hungary (capturing Temesvár and Temesköz region, capturing Veszprém, Lippa, Szolnok, Verőce and Čazma, unsuccessful siege of Eger). Invading and looting the Székely region in Transylvania.
2 War in the Mediterranean: the Ottoman naval fleet occupying Tripoli in Lybia.
3 War in the Persian Gulf. attack against the Hormuz Island (under Portugese rule) by the Ottoman naval fleet from the Red Sea by Piri Reis: raiding Muscat and besieging Hormuz. (seeking control of the Indian Ocean)
4 Occupying the Arab Iraq (the region between Baghdad and Basra).
5 Growing tensions on the boundaries with Safavid Persia: the Persian army destroying the castle of Ahlat, after defeating the army of beylerbeyi of Erzurum.
6 Unrest of the Cossacks. Muscovy occupying the Khanate of Kazan
ATLANTIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
SAFAVID EMPIRE (PERSIA)
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
FRANCE
SPAIN
POLAND
LITHUANIA
KHANATE OF CRIMEA
KHANATE OF ASTRAKHAN
MOROCCO
Caspian Sea
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Red Sea
Persian Gulf
ARABIA
SAHARA
Egypt
Fezzan
Algiers
Tunis
Tripoli
Cyrenaica
Hejaz
Yemen
Lahsa
Iraq
Syria
Mesopotamia
Kurdistan
Armenia
Georgia
Anatolia
Rumelia
Hungary
Transylvania
Moldavia
Wallachia
Bosnia
Naples
Istanbul (Constantinople)
Paris
Prague
Kraków
Vienna
Buda
Eger
Szolnok
Temesvár
Brassó
Belgrade
Čazma
Spalato
Ragusa
Venice
Genua
Pisa
Rome
Naples
Messina
Sicily
Malta
Sardinia
Corsica
Toulon
Marseilles
Barcelona
Valencia
Madrid
Sevilla
Tanger
Oran
Algiers
Tunis
Tripoli
Benghazi
Alexandria
Cairo
Suez
Jerusalem
Damascus
Beirut
Aleppo
Raqqa
Baghdad
Mosul
Basra
Al Qatif
Bahrain
Medina
Mecca
Jidda
Aden
Muscat
Hormuz
Sokotra
Shiraz
Isfahan
Tebriz
Van
Ahlat
Erzurum
Trabzon
Konya
Smyrna
Athens
Salonica
Sofia
Silistra
Rhodes
Cyprus (Venice)
Crete (Venice)
Corfu (Venice)
Bakhchisarai
Kerch
Azov
Astrakhan
Derbent
Baku
Tiflis
Merv
Don Cossacks
Dnieper Cossacks
Terek Cossacks
Cherkes
Balearic Is.

against Eger, there is not a word in the orders (even though available until the end of the year) about the siege of the castle and the termination of the military campaign. If there were no other sources on these events, we would not even know of the Ottomans having laid siege to the "Gate of Upper Hungary".

The limits of imperial politics

Still, it would be wrong to view the failures of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary as being rooted solely in the interim modification of goals, in the mistakes of the local military leadership, or in a lack of time (even though this latter factor clearly played a role in the fiasco at Eger). The primary reason for failure lay in the absence of clearly defined aims or strategies on the part of the leaders of the empire. In 1552, Ottoman decision-making became particularly difficult, as there were many other problems to solve elsewhere in and around the empire.

1. After they regained their freedom of movement in 1550, the French re-established cooperation with the Ottomans, and in 1551 a war in the Mediterranean with Charles V broke out anew. The Ottoman naval fleet occupied Tripoli in Libya, and from the autumn of 1551, similarly to 1543–1544, the two allies proceeded to set up a joint sea operation combined with a land-attack by the French against Naples. Though the Ottoman Empire threw a lot of money and other resources at the undertaking in 1552 (120 ships set sail with 5,000 men aboard and they were accompanied by two to three ships of the French envoy), the fleet had to return without any tangible results owing to organisational and provisional difficulties and due to shortness of time.[238]

[238] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Vol. II. Translated from the French by Siân Reynolds. (New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London, 1973), 911–926, 974–992. Stéphan Yerasimos, 'Les relations

2. Besides these diverse engagements and after a prolonged period of passivity, it was at this time that the imperial court committed itself to take up arms against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean with a view to obtaining a bigger slice from the cake of long-distance trade. They ventured to push forward from two directions: from Iraq and from the Red Sea. In December 1546, the governor-general of Baghdad occupied Basra, which became the centre of an independent province *(beylerbeyilik)*. In 1550, Ottoman troops invaded Lahsa on the western side of the Persian Gulf, establishing a *sancak* around its port, Qatif. They also erected a fortress packed with cannons near Bahrain. After such arrangements, in 1552 the Porte considered that the time had come to occupy the whole of Arab Iraq (the region between Baghdad and Basra) and to launch an attack against Hormuz Island, which lay under Portuguese rule at the time. The first task was completed by the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad during the spring. Reinforced with the armies of Diyarbekir and Karaman, as well as some troops of the Porte, he captured the wet and marshy lands called Cezayir, situated to the northeast of Basra at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. Its strongest fortress, Medina, was made into the centre of a new *beylerbeyilik*, and the governor-general of Basra was transferred to govern it in the future. Medina's conqueror, the *beylerbeyi* of Baghdad, however, stayed there for months, because the organisation of the new administrative-military unit was beset by many difficulties. Meanwhile in April 1552, Piri Reis launched an Ottoman fleet of 25 galleys and 4 galleons *(kalyon)* from Suez with 850 soldiers aboard to take Hormuz away from the Portuguese. On the way,

franco–ottomanes et la prise de Tripoli en 1551', in Veinstein (publ.), *Soliman le Magnifique*, 529–547. Gilles Veinstein, 'Les préparatifs de la campagne navale franco-turque de 1552 à travers les ordres du divan ottoman', *Reveu de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985) 35–67. Cf. Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel*, 40–42, 114–140.

he raided Muscat in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula and besieged the island in late September. Then, however, the Ottoman ships were forced to pull back to Basra to escape the Portuguese relief fleet, and the admiral fled back to Egypt with three ships, for which the sultan promptly ordered his execution. In the long term, this defeat effectively discouraged the Ottomans from seeking control of the Indian Ocean.[239]

3. Further, the growing tension on the boundaries with Iran caused the Ottoman leadership much distress during the year. The two great powers had most recently fought a war in 1548–49, when, following the revolt and escape of a Safavid prince, Elkas Mirza, the sultan thought that the time had come for the final defeat of his strongest enemy in the Middle East, the Safavid dynasty. His hopes, however, had not been borne out by subsequent developments; indeed, he only managed, save from a punitive expedition against Georgia, to seize the fortress of Van, where he set up another *beylerbeyilik*.[240] Since that time, in line with the traditional methods, Ottoman politics had aimed, on the one hand, at luring to the empire tribal leaders in the frontier zone, which was inhabited by various ethnic and religious groups (mainly Kurds), and, on the other hand, at maintaining good relations with the minor states on the border, including Gilan, Şirvan and Georgia.[241] In the year in question, as mentioned above, the situation at the Georgian border became more acute. The Ottoman sources describe the reasons for this in a contradictory manner. The statesman and chronicler Lütfi

[239] Salih Özbaran, 'XVI. Yüzyılda Basra Körfezi Sâhillerinde Osmanlılar: Basra Beylerbeyliğinin Kuruluşu', *Tarih Dergisi* 25 (1971) 51–73. Idem, 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Hindistan Yolu, 65–146, particularly 112–128. Cengiz Orhonlu, 'Hint Kaptanlığı ve Pîrî Reis', *Belleten* 34:134 (1970) 235–254. Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*, 95–98. Soucek, 'About the Ottoman Age of Exploration', 329–331.

[240] John R. Walsh, 'The Revolt of Alqās Mīrzā', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 68 (1976) 61–78. Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 116–122.

[241] About the bottom lines of the eastern policy of the empire, see Murphey, 'Süleyman's Eastern Policy', 229–248.

Pasha reports that some Georgian and Safavid nobles were about to bring the tributes due to the shah, but the *beylerbeyi* of Erzurum got wind of it and robbed the money, murdered several people and captured many Iranian nobles.[242] Conversely, the orders of the divan state that many Georgian nobles were ready to cooperate with the Porte, subject to an assurance that they would be allowed to keep their lands and social status. Such a letter of agreement *(ahdname)* granting safety of life and property to a Georgian monarch has survived the perils of history.[243] According to the sultan's orders, the crisis was provoked by the "heretic" Safavids attacking the cooperating Georgians, whom the Ottomans had to save. Whatever aroused the hostility, in the end the shah did indeed gather an army, marched to the vicinity of Lake Van, raided and destroyed the castle of Ahlat in August and then pulled back to Erciş. Thereafter, he sent out his son with many troops, who entrapped and badly defeated the armies of the *beylerbeyi* of Erzurum, wounding even the pasha himself. The Safavid incursion or revenge campaign led the sultan's court to accelerate preparations – commenced at the beginning of the year – for a military campaign against Iran. In successive fashion, the troops were mobilised and commanded to different concourses (chiefly in the vicinity of Sivas, Ankara and Kayseri). In late September, first the grand vizier, and then the sultan himself, set out for the east. The launching of the campaign, however, had to be delayed until the following year due to heavy snow.

In my view, this brief account of events suffices to show that the Ottoman Empire was burdened beyond its capacities in 1552. One might even say that the Ottoman leadership had become utterly perplexed by this point in time (a historian more

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242 Lütfi Paşa, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*. (İstanbul, 1341/1925), 450.

243 İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 39a, cf. 37a–38b, 39b–40a.

elegantly calls it a "crisis of orientation"),[244] for which indications can be seen since as early as the 1530s. Consonant with his dignity, the "magnificent" sultan sought to achieve the maximum at all times and on all fronts, but increasingly he encountered failure. As never before, the events of the said year revealed the weaknesses of a global policy that had proved incapable of prioritising among the various fronts and tasks. All in all, in 1552 the Ottomans sought victory in five different arenas (Hungary, the Mediterranean Sea, the Iranian border, Iraq and Hormuz). The dissipation of their military and financial resources meant their original goals could not be achieved in most cases. (And we have not even mentioned the northern front, where the primary threat came not so much from the Cossacks or Poles but from the rise of a new great power, Russia. When the latter conquered the Khanate of Kazan, the Ottoman court and its Crimean ally could only watch as the events unfolded.)[245]

An even more serious problem was the weakening financial position of the empire, a direct result of its desultory policies. Not even such an extraordinary great power could afford to wage so many wars with impunity. The detrimental effects of the conquests are also clearly reflected in Ottoman documents stemming from 1552. In connection with the organisation of the *vilayet* of Temeşvar, Istanbul and Kara Ahmed Pasha squabbled over in whose interest the expansion of the empire really lay. According to the court, expansionism lay chiefly in the interest of the upper echelon of the army, which quickly turned the policy to its own benefit. "You know very well," Ahmed Pasha was told,

[244] Subhi Labib, 'The Era of Suleyman the Magnificent: Crisis of Orientation', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979) 435–451.

[245] On the expansion of the Russian Empire, see Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia 980–1584.* (Cambridge, 1996^2), 351–357. On the beginnings of the Cossack incursions causing many troubles later on, see Berindei – Veinstein, *L'Empire ottoman,* 89–119 and Gilles Veinstein, 'Prélude au problème cosaque à travers les registres de dommages ottomans des années 1545–1555', *Cahiers de Monde russe et sovietique* 30:3–4 (1989) 329–362.

"that usually the *beylerbeyi*s divide such newly conquered lands at their own discretion among their favourites under the title of *sancak, ziamet,* and *timar* or under the title of the rehabilitation of devastated lands, in order to grant senior offices and prebends to them. Nevertheless, they do not care about raising enough money to cover the pay of the garrison troops or the costs of the armament and other necessities of the castles, and so while money is flowing to them from the inner provinces, the area does not start to boom, and instead of profit it produces costs and losses."[246] This last sentence amounts to clear acknowledgement of the ending of an era when the borderlands did not only fritter away money but also made some (mainly from spoils) and the beginning of a new era in which further expansion would impose increasing financial burdens on the central treasury – unless the conquered area were as rich as the aforementioned mining districts in Upper Hungary. The immediacy of this problem is shown by the fact that the dispute that occurred in Temeşvar was repeated during the establishment of the *beylerbeyilik* of Cezayir–Medina in Iraq. On August 5, the *divan* informed the local finance director (also holding the post of *defterdar* in Basra) that the following complaints had been received by the court: 1. lands being suitable for the *has*-estates of the sultan had been assigned in part to *sancakbeyi*s and in part to other people for a low rent; 2. the latter ones were subsequently taken by others as tax farms by force, causing enormous damage to those who had invested in and re-cultivated those lands; 3. some

[246] *Ama malumundur ki bu asl yeni açılan yerleri beğlerbeğiler muradları üzere kimisine sancak deyü ve kimisine tımar ve ziamet deyü ve harabesin şenletmek deyü mücerred istedükleri kimesnelere mansıb ve dirlik sahibi olmağıçün dağıtmağı adet edüb ol diyarun muhafazasıçün tayin olunan kulun mevacibine ve kılaun levazım ve yarağın[un] harcına kifayet edecek kadar mal tedarik eylemeğe mukayyed olmamağla muttasıl iç ilden hazine gidüb memleket dahi şenlenmeyüb israf ve itlafdan gayri menfaatleri yokdur.* İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 347a–347b. Dávid – Fodor, *"Affairs of State"*, 554–556: No. 292.

of the taxes levied under Arab rule were let go, thus reducing the revenues of the treasury; 4. the holders of the highest offices (*beylerbeyi*s, *sancakbeyi*s, *ağa*s) granted military offices to their own people and servants, but still they continued to serve them (even children are listed on the payroll). As a consequence, the treasury was depleted, and public services were not performed.[247]

Although the sultan's court failed to abandon the wars of conquests for reasons of power politics and under the pressure of its own oversized army and state apparatus, there was evidently a growing awareness of the futility and ever-decreasing profitability of these wars. In the 1550s the empire was rapidly drawing near to its financial limits. A money shortage occurred, and the central administration could only manage by extending the institution of tax farm, which, in the long run, led to the depletion of reserves and the over-burdening of the tax-paying population. The contemporaries as well as later observers blamed Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha (1544–1553, 1555–1561) for the introduction of "destructive" (but apparently unavoidable) measures.[248] In this context it is worth noting that these measures were not unprecedented. The extensive wars of Mehmed II (1451–1481) could only be financed by imposing heavy taxes on the peasantry and, to a certain degree, by confiscating hereditary and foundation estates.[249] The enormous costs of the endless wars in the first decades of Sultan Süleyman's reign also

[247] İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Koğuşlar 888, 395b.

[248] It is hardly accidental that during his tenure of office the institution of venality appeared with governor's posts. On all this, see M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, 'Rüstem Paşa ve Hakkındaki İthamlar', *Tarih Dergisi* 8:11–12 (1955) 11–50. Cf. Klaus Röhrborn, *Untersuchungen zur osmanischen Verwaltungsgeschichte*. (Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift "Der Islam". Hrsg. von Bertold Spuler. Neue Folge, Band 5.) (Berlin, New York, 1973), 114–115, 119, 126 and Baki Çakır, *Osmanlı Mukataa Sistemi (XVI–XVIII. Yüzyıl)*. (İstanbul, 2003), 36, 38.

[249] Heath Lowry, 'Changes in Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The Case Study of Radilofo', in Anthony Bryer – Heath Lowry (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*. (Birmingham, Washington, D.C.), 1986,

required the ever fuller exploration of the empire's resources, to which we owe the great number of meticulously prepared *defter*s from this period.[250] It is telling that toward the end of his career, even Celalzade Mustafa, a confidant of Sultan Süleyman and chief collaborator of his universalist imperial programme, came to realise the devastating effects of the incessant warfare.[251] The real solution would have been to prioritise the wars, unavoidable for structural reasons, to a certain degree and to ensure that military action served long-term strategic objectives (such as tightening control of trade in the Mediterranean). The Ottoman leadership failed, however, to do this, and by the end of the century the traditional financial administration system of the empire collapsed under the unbearable weight of burdens. One of the key milestones on this road was the multi-front war

23–27, 34. Oktay Özel, 'Limits of Almighty: Mehmed II's 'Land Reform' Revisited', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42:2 (1999) 226–246.

[250] They were published by the T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı from the first half of the 1990s onwards; see for instance, *438 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Anadolu Defteri [937/1530]*. Vols. I–II. (Ankara, 1993–1994).

[251] Şahin, *Empire and Power*, 127–128. For the beginning of the social unrest and banditry in the 1550s that led to the so-called *celali* rebellions, see Gyula Káldy-Nagy, 'Rural and Urban Life in the Age of Sultan Suleiman', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32:3 (1978) 288–295. – In view of this, I disagree with Rhoads Murphey and Suraiya Faroqhi, who seem to underestimate the impact of wars and the war-related activities of the state on Ottoman economy and society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, 169–192. Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, 98–110. To expand on this question would go beyond the scope of this study, and so I refer solely to the fact that taxes collected from the sultanic *has*es in the *sancak* of Buda were increased by 300 per cent in the second half of the sixteenth century; Klára Hegyi, *Török berendezkedés Magyarországon* [Ottoman rule in Hungary]. (História könyvtár. Monográfiák, 7.) (Budapest, 1995), 63. It has been also pointed out that the wars at the turn of seventeenth century led to a near-complete destruction of the revenue sources of the province of Buda. Cf. Hegyi, 'The Financial Position of the *Vilayet*s in Hungary', 77–85. For a new assessment of the effects of the heavy demands of war, see Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. (Cambridge, 2011).

of 1552, which, seen in this broader context, seems to have been much less successful than previously thought.[252]

EPILOGUE: THE ROAD TO SZIGETVÁR

The problems that remained unresolved in Hungary in 1552 accompanied Süleyman until the end of his life. The Ottoman ruler continued to seek for ways of strengthening and consolidating his position in Hungary even after he launched his final Iranian campaign (1553), which led to a compromise between the two rival Middle Eastern powers (the Peace Treaty of Amasya, 1555) and even while he dealt with the succession struggle between his two sons and its consequences (1558–62) and made renewed (only partially successful) attempts to strengthen Ottoman positions in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean (the operation to take Bahrein in 1559; the capture of Djerba, 1560; the siege of Malta, 1565, the occupation of Chios, 1566, etc).[253] The apparent guiding principle of Süleyman's policy was to push the Habsburgs out of Transylvania and to return the principality to the heir of the House of Szapolyai, John Sigismund, which meant that the Ottoman ruler abandoned the idea of occupying this part of Hungary for good. To this end, Süleyman made a mixture of diplomatic and military threats (while his troops in Hungary

[252] Gábor Ágoston is of the opinion (see, for instance, 'The Ottomans: From Frontier Principality', 128) that the Ottoman leaders – in line with the empire's "grand strategy" – tried to avoid, as far as possible, waging war simultaneously on more than one front. Based on the aforesaid, I think this may only apply to the period after the mid-sixteenth century. Even so, I agree with Ágoston (*ibid.*, 126) that the Ottomans had reached the limits of their logistical capacities by that time – mainly because they were unable to properly set the priorities among their military-political tasks.

[253] For the major events of the period, see Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, Vol. 4, 586 ff. Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 134–151.

continued to harass and capture Hungarian strongholds).[254] On March 7, 1553, Süleyman appointed John Sigismund "King of Hungary and Transylvania". His hope was that Hungarians would now unite in support of the chosen ruler.[255] Of course, this is not what happened, albeit in 1556 John Sigismund and Queen Isabella were able to return to, and take charge of, Transylvania. In view of the unresolved territorial issues and the presence of power ambitions on both sides, there was repeated armed conflict between John Sigismund and the Habsburg kings of Hungary (Ferdinand and then, from 1564, Maximilian).[256] Neither the unratified Habsburg–Ottoman agreement of 1559 nor the eight-year peace treaty of 1562, which was renewed in early 1565, could bring an end to the hostilities.[257] Moreover, the Habsburg-Hungarian border defence forces (particularly

[254] For an excellent study of this period, see Markus Köhbach, *Die Eroberung von Fülek durch die Osmanen 1554. Eine historisch-quellenkritische Studie zur osmanischen Expansion im östlichen Mitteleuropa.* (Zur Kunde Südosteuropas, II/18.) (Wien, Köln, Weimar, 1994).

[255] İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşvi, Kepeci 210, 311. Cf. Fodor, 'Das Wilajet von Temeschwar', 28.

[256] On the formation of statehood in Transylvania, see János B. Szabó, 'Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power in the Principality of Transylvania in East European Context', *Majestas* 11 (2003) 111–160. Teréz Oborni, 'Between Vienna and Constantinople: Notes on the Legal Status of the Principality of Transylvania', in Gábor Kármán – Lovro Kunčević (eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy. Ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İnalcik and Boğaç Ergene. Vol. 53.) (Leiden, Boston, 2013), 67–89. Károly Kisteleki, 'Az európai szuverenitás nézőpontjai és az erdélyi állam [Aspects of European sovereignty and the Principality of Transylvania]', in Veronika Dáné et al. (eds.), *Bethlen Erdélye, Erdély Bethlene. A Bethlen Gábor trónra lépésének 400. évfordulóján rendezett konferencia tanulmányai* [Proceedings of a conference commemorating the 450th anniversary of the accession of Gábor Bethlen]. (Kolozsvár, 2014), 162–185.

[257] Ernst Dieter Petritsch, *Regesten der osmanischen Dokumente im österreichischen Staatsarchiv. Band 1. (1480–1574).* (Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs. Ergänzungsband, 10/1.) (Wien, 1991), 131–156. Köhbach, *Die Eroberung von Fülek,* 17–82. For the relevant documents, see also Anton C. Schaendlinger (unter Mitarbeit von Claudia Römer), *Die Schreiben Süleymāns des Prächtigen an Karl V., Ferdinand I. and Maximilian II. Transkriptionen und Übersetzungen.* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften, 163. Band) (Wien, 1983).

those of the castles of Eger, Szigetvár and Gyula) attacked and plundered territories held by the Ottomans with growing audacity.[258] In 1565, John Sigismund's situation became rather desperate, and so Süleyman had no choice but to lead his troops in defence of his protégé and with a view to stabilising Ottoman dominion in Hungary.[259]

There was much speculation at the time and subsequently about the factors that led the sick and aged monarch to set out for Hungary in 1566. Historians often cite the change in the grand vizieral office (the relatively peaceful Semiz Ali Pasha's post was taken up by the more bellicose Sokollu Mehmed), the delay in the payment of the tribute by the Habsburgs, or the influence of Nureddinzade, the favoured Halveti sheikh, who had reminded the sultan of his duty to perform jihad.[260] It is difficult to verify and evaluate these factors, but it is quite possible that Nureddinzade, in reminding Süleyman of his obligation, was in fact conveying a growing sense of dissatisfaction among

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[258] Szakály, *Magyar adóztatás*, 59–98. Cf. *5 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (973/1565–1566). Vol. I: Özet ve İndeks. Vol. II: Tıpkıbasım.* (Ankara, 1994) and Gisela Procházka-Eisl – Claudia Römer, *Osmanische Beamtenschreiben und Privatbriefe der Zeit Süleymāns des Prächtigen aus dem Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv zu Wien.* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften, 357. Band) (Wien, 2007), documents relating to Eğri, Sigetvar and Gula.

[259] At their solemn meeting in Belgrade, however, he stated that the capture of Vienna was his aim; see Ferenc Forgách, *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról Ferdinánd, János, Miksa királysága és II. János erdélyi fejedelemsége alatt* [Memorandum on the state of Hungary under the rule of Ferdinand, John, Maximilian and under the Transylvanian principality of John II], in *Humanista történetírók* [Humanist historians]. (Budapest, 1977), 851–854.

[260] These are well-summarised by Gilles Veinstein, 'La campagne de Szigetvár et la mort de Soliman le Magnifique, au-delà des mythes et légendes' (unpublished paper, Budapest, April 19, 2011). See also Nicolas Vatin, *Ferîdûn Bey,* Les plaisants secrets de la campagne de Szigetvár. *Édition, traduction et commentaire des folios 1 à 147 du* Nüzhetü-l-esrâri-l-ahbâr der sefer-i Sigetvâr *(ms. H 1339 de la Bibliothèque de Musée de Topkapı Sarayı).* (Neue Beihefte zur Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Band 7.), Wien, 2010, 16–23, and Erika Hancz – Fatih Elçil, 'Excavations and Field Research in Sigetvar in 2009–2011: Focusing on Ottoman-Turkish Remains', *International Review of Turkish Studies* 2:4 (2012) 77–78.

the troops. Around 1558, the janissaries expressed their anger at the sultan's having become a sedentary ruler as follows: "The padishah is the padishah of Islam. He does not know anything about anyone by living within four walls. He places all his confidence in a host of tyrants when proclaiming 'I have viziers, everyone has his *ağa* and they know whose interest is what'. He (the sultan) is unaware of the condition of the people. … Why is that so?"[261] It seems the ruler was facing a grave crisis of legitimacy; he needed to prove his valour and worth and restore his shattered authority. What better could serve this purpose than a return to the grand programme of the initial period and a further successful campaign against the "King of Vienna"?

Accordingly, in 1566 Süleyman attempted to revive his old self, the conquering sultan. Still, instead of a new life, death awaited him. And rather than conquer Vienna, he managed "only" to capture a Hungarian border fortress: Szigetvár – regardless of the importance of the fortress for the consolidation of Ottoman territory in Hungary. Paradoxically, therefore, the world conqueror's final victory and the castle of Szigetvár, which soon became a sacral centre of the Ottoman world,[262] could even be a symbol of the failure of Ottoman ambitions for world domination. But they could also be deemed a symbol of a serious political legacy. With his policy in Hungary and Transylvania, Süleyman left to his successors a programme that they could not, or did not wish to, break with and that they sought time and again to realise. At the focus of this programme lay a conquest of Vienna (and the defeat of the Habsburgs).[263] This was the aim of the Ottoman campaigns of 1593–94,

[261] Quoted in Pál Fodor, 'Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Changes in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral *telhis*', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47:1–2 (1994) 80–81.

[262] On this, see Nicolas Vatin, 'Un *türbe* sans maître. Note sur la fondation et la destination du *türbe* de Soliman-le-Magnifique à Szigetvár', *Turcica* 37 (2005) 9–42.

[263] Fodor, 'Ungarn und Wien'.

1663–64, and 1683. Despite partial successes (e.g. the repeated creation of new governorships in Hungary), the project ended in complete failure: the loss of Hungary. Successor generations came to view Süleyman as an ideal ruler and his reign as a golden age. Perhaps this explains why they failed to perceive how, as prisoners of his legacy, they were squandering the resources of the empire for wrong ends the same way as their paragon did during his 45 years of reign.

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Abbreviations: B: Bulgarian; Cr: Croatian; G: German; H: Hungarian; O: Ottoman; R: Rumanian; S: Serbian; Sl: Slovak

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This book seeks to understand why the Ottoman Empire was constantly at war, why it persistently attacked Hungary for more than a hundred years and why Ottoman leadership regarded Hungary, or more broadly, Central Europe as the most important of its frontlines in the early sixteenth century. The study's primary aim is to offer a more realistic picture of the role of the Hungarian/Central European frontier in Ottoman politico-military planning. In doing so, the book attempts to show how the conflict in this region affected the fate of the Ottoman Empire in the long run and how a series of erroneous decisions on the part of the Ottoman court led to the failure of its universalist imperial programme. In addition, the author challenges some trends in recent historiography of the Ottoman Empire that go too far in entangling Ottoman and European history.

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